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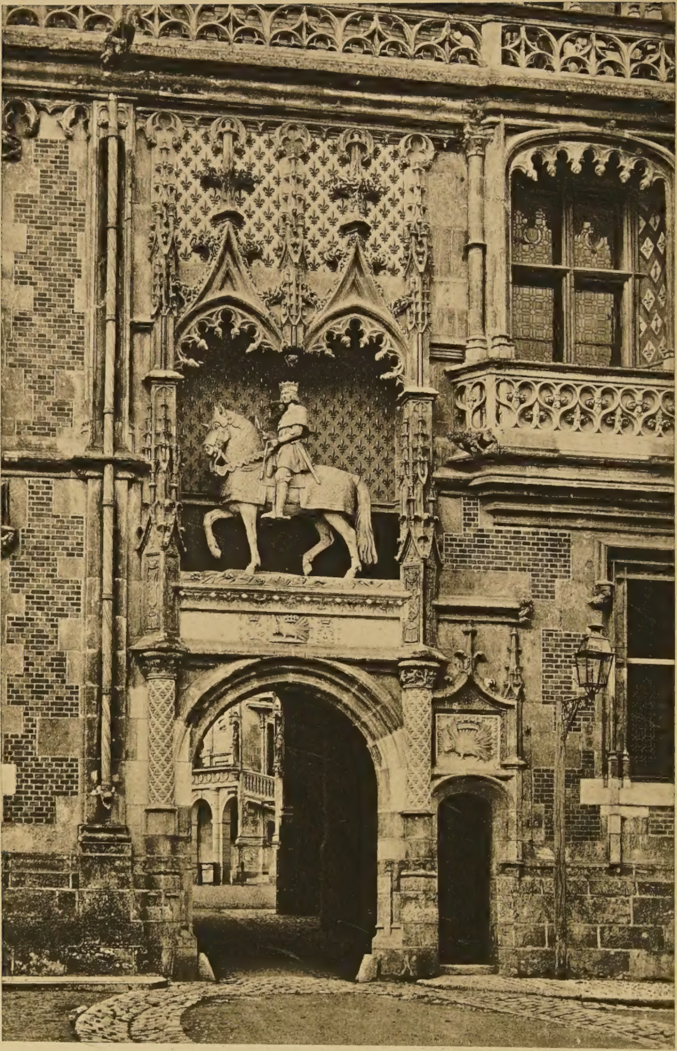

Wing of Louis XII., Blois.

Entrance.

PHOTOGRAVURE.

FRENCH CATHEDRALS AND CHATEAUX

BY

CLARA CRAWFORD PERKINS

ILLUSTRATED

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME II

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CHATEAUX

"*To him who can decipher it, heraldry is an emblematic language. The whole history of the latter half of the middle ages is written in heraldry, as that of the former half is in the symbolism of the churches of Roman architecture.*"

VICTOR HUGO.

FRENCH CATHEDRALS AND CHATEAUX

Chapter I

MILITARY AND DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE IN FRANCE. THE RENAISSANCE STYLE

WHEN the Renaissance movement began in Europe, the great age of Church building was over. It is possible, of course, to name a few large and magnificent examples of Renaissance ecclesiastical architecture, such as St. Peter's at Rome and St. Paul's in London, and there are many late Gothic churches, notably the cathedrals at Milan and Tours, upon whose walls the final work was the addition of Renaissance details and ornaments; yet it remains true that the chief strength and beauty of the new style went into secular and domestic building.

In France, even in secular architecture, the early work of the Renaissance style was largely confined to a remodelling of those old strongholds which had been developed into irregular and picturesque

Gothic chateaux. Many of these, in the beginning, had been little more than grim fortresses, the foundations often those of Roman fortifications, as at Chinon. Plans and construction were primarily military, their design and strength rendered necessary by the almost constant warfare of mediæval life. Walls were of enormous thickness, battlemented and machicolated, and with few or small exterior openings. Round corners present fewer points of attack than square ones, so the angles of enclosures were protected by round towers. These were carried up to a considerable height, to overlook the country and the enemy, and were built out from the wall they protected, that it also might be watched.

The architectural development of these fortress-chateaux during the Gothic period shows a growing beauty and richness of form and detail. The luxuriance of Gothic ornament was largely confined to interior walls, to courts, and halls; but pinnacles, towers, dormers, and grotesques multiplied everywhere, producing that picturesque outline, that broken and irregular sky line, which is the most striking characteristic of all Gothic work.

There were many of these magnificent Gothic chateaux in France; but so large a number of them have been destroyed or remodelled, that comparatively few of importance are left. The best is probably that of Pierrefonds, which has been lately restored, and now serves as a national historical monument, and a splendid example of the late Gothic style in military and domestic architecture.

Following the Gothic development in France, came the Renaissance movement, introduced from Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which was to brand the early style as barbaric, and introduce a new influence into French architecture. The re-discovery of Greek and Roman literature, science, and art had produced in the south an overwhelming enthusiasm for classical learning and classical forms, whose result in architecture was an imitative style known as the Renaissance. This style, which originated in Italy, was destined to spread all over Europe, and to produce, besides the Italian development, the French Renaissance, the English Renaissance, the Spanish Renaissance, and so on through a long list. All were founded primarily upon a return to classical models, or Italian imitations of them, and produced styles whose fundamental principles were diametrically opposed to those of the Gothic.

In Greek architecture, the emphasis was placed upon horizontal lines; in the Gothic, upon upright ones. In the Roman style, the arch was round; in the Gothic, it was pointed. In all classical architecture, there is a great regularity and balance of parts, and a level and comparatively unbroken sky line; in the Gothic, there is the utmost irregularity of arrangement and a sky line broken by chimneys, towers, pinnacles, gargoyles, and crockets.

In both the classical and mediæval styles, decorative designs were modelled primarily upon natural forms. Greek and Roman ornament, however, was conventionalized into the stiffness and regularity of a set pattern, while the Gothic was rendered with the freedom of life and growth, restrained only by the limitations of materials and architectural fitness.

As the Renaissance style was developed in Italy, not only were classical mouldings and details reproduced, but new designs were adapted and invented, conceived, of course, in a like conventional spirit. The double scroll repeated the regularity, while it softened the harshness of the Greek fret; and in the richer designs, where flowers were used, they were gathered into nosegays or tied into festoons at regular intervals. Many of these designs came to be known as distinctively Renaissance ornament. They were entirely artificial in feeling, but often of exquisite grace and beauty.

It was these matters of classical and Renaissance detail which were first introduced into France, where it was found comparatively easy to add them to Gothic walls; but new walls must be built before the regularity of classic arrangement could be reproduced. Even when new foundations were laid, the hold of custom was so strong that the fundamental form of the Gothic chateau continued to get itself reproduced for many years, notwithstanding the force of the Renaissance movement. And that most marked characteristic of classical architecture, the unbroken sky line, is not found in France until well on toward the latter half of the Renaissance period.

Following the use of classical and Renaissance mouldings and ornaments, in the Renaissance development in France, came the adoption of pilasters and pediments for decorative purposes. The Greeks had used the column solely for purposes of construction. It supported a roof or wall. In the hands of the Romans, it often became purely decorative, used, as in the walls of the Colosseum, to support a sham architrave. In the Romanesque style, it became a feature of the decorative arcades. And from the condition of a free but useless column, placed in front of a wall, to that of an engaged column, only partially emerging from it, was but a natural progression. The next and last step produced the square pilaster, with only a fourth or a fifth of its diameter in projection; and as Greek columns could seldom be introduced into domestic architecture in any other way, these shallow pilasters, with their Greek or Roman or newly invented Renaissance capitals, came to be a pronounced feature of the Renaissance style. The panelling of walls by the use of pilasters was also recognised as an admirable means of producing that regularity and balance of arrangement which was considered to reproduce the stately spirit of classic architecture. Such was the degeneration of the column. In like manner, the pediment, which had been a constructive feature of Greek architecture, became, in Renaissance hands, a cap or dripstone for doors and windows.

The Renaissance style in France may be broadly divided into three periods, of which the first and greatest is that usually known as the period of Francis I. The style of this period has its roots in the Gothic, and its chief characteristic is the addition of formal Renaissance ornament to the freedom and irregularity of Gothic construction. It is the severe beauty of the classic spirit, transformed by French taste, and adapted to purely French architecture; and the style remains distinctly French.

As many of the most beautiful monuments of this period were produced before the reign of Francis I., it is a question whether it should not be called the period of Louis XII. It is customary, however, to designate the styles and ornamental designs, which had reached their culmination of beauty and grace when he ascended the throne, as of the period of Francis I. Among the most beautiful monuments of this period are the chateaux of Azay le Rideau, Chenonceaux, and the wings of Louis XII. and Francis I. at Blois.

The second period began with the reign of Henry II.; but as many of its chief monuments were produced in obedience to the commands of Catherine de Medicis during her thirty years of power after his death, it may be styled the period of Catherine de Medicis. The chief architects of this period were Lescot, Philibert de l'Orme, and Bullant.

The first great success of the period, Lescot's wing of the Louvre, was possibly begun during the last year of the reign of Francis I., but it is permeated with a new spirit. It is not only conceived from the foundation after the symmetrical and orderly fashion of classical monuments, but its ornamentation is a fuller and richer expression of the Renaissance spirit than that of the more delicate early style. Later monuments became more classical, as the portal of the chateau of Anet erected by De l'Orme for Diane de Poitiers remains to prove; but it is not until the reign of Henry IV. that this period begins to degenerate into barrenness of invention and coarse and meaningless ornamentation.

The third period is that of Louis XIV. Architecturally, this period is the Renaissance grown to its largest possible size, and so dominated by academical rules and regulations as to have lost all of its early life and grace. It is also no longer distinctively French. The best example of the period, the Colonnade of the Louvre, should almost be classed with the work of the later period known as the Revival, when direct copies of classical buildings, such as the Madeleine and the Pantheon, were attempted.

The most stupendous example of the period of Louis XIV. is the huge and barren palace of Versailles. In this, as in much late Renaissance work, the exterior has become more barren and unattractive, and the interior more splendid. Indeed, it may almost be said that various distinctive styles of interior decoration were a more important result of this period than architectural style.

These three periods are those most often given, and the divisions, those usually accepted, though by some authorities the later work is declared not French at all, but only a feeble imitation of Italian and classic styles. Mrs. Mark Pattison defines the French Renaissance as ending with the accession of Henry IV., and one must admit that the great periods came before that event, and that the interest of later monuments is more largely historic than artistic. There was a movement in the eighteenth century, which produced some admirable and characteristic work. Its chief architect, Gabriel, has left some fine monuments. One of his most charming productions was that ideal country house in the classic style, "*La Petite Trianon.*" The work of this later period, however, will not be studied in the present volume, which will close with the colossal creation of Louis XIV., the chateau at Versailles.

Chapter II

PIERREFONDS

THE date of the first chateau at Pierrefonds is lost in obscurity; the first account we have of it being of its reconstruction out of the débris of an earlier royal abode. Whether it was the earlier "royal abode," or the reconstructed chateau which served as the residence of Charles the Bald in 855, is a matter of doubt, as well as the date when the domain came into the possession of a family named Nivelon. We know, however, that the reconstructed chateau was an unpretending structure, on a slight eminence southwest of the present town of Pierrefonds, and that it reverted to the crown in or about 1185. It is related by one authority that Philip Augustus purchased the estate from the Nivelons, and installed his prevosts, judges or tax collectors, for that district, in its chateau.

For about two hundred years, Pierrefonds remained crown property. Then, in 1392, Charles VI. gave it, with all of Valois, to his brilliant brother Louis, he who founded the power and wealth of the great House of Orleans. Indeed, it was the same year in which he received Pierrefonds that Louis, until then Duc de Touraine, arranged a clever exchange with the weak-minded king, which gave him Orleans instead of Touraine, and created him Duc d'Orleans, the title by which he is usually known. Froissart says this exchange was most advantageous for the duke, and it made him one of the richest and most powerful princes in the kingdom. Louis had recently purchased Blois, and he also owned Chateau Thierry in Champagne, besides other estates and chateaux; but as far as is known, his only important work in architecture was the splendid Gothic chateau at Pierrefonds which he began on a new site in 1398. The work is said to have been completed in 1406. Although, since that date, wars and revolutions have several times visited Pierrefonds with more or less violence, restorations are considered still to preserve for us the form and style of the chateau then erected.[1]

In 1398, feudalism, whose chief strength lay in the impregnable walls of fortress-castles, was still a power in Europe. Gunpowder was in use as early as Crécy (1346); but it did not become a factor in the making of history or begin the revolutionizing of architecture, until a hundred and fifty years later. Pierrefonds, therefore, is still a mediæval fortress; and having been erected at the moment of the greatest perfection of the Gothic, when the Renaissance movement, even in Italy, had scarcely begun, it is a pure example of the earlier style. The great lords, however, even in the north, had begun to desire creature comforts and private splendour, and Louis d' Orléans, besides being enormously rich, fairly overtopped even the king in power, while his ambition left nothing undesired. Consequently he made Pierrefonds magnificent in size, in strength, and in detail, and it remains to-day one of the most splendid examples in Europe of a fortress-chateau in the Gothic style.

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[1] The last restoration of Pierrefonds is only recently accomplished; and whether the actual early walls, except those of the exterior, are correctly reproduced is doubted by some authorities, as the domestic buildings were pretty thoroughly demolished in the seventeenth century.

The present interior decorations are also characterised by one French critic as "fantastic." The ability of the restorer, M. Viollet-le-Duc, must, however, assure us, that full advantage was undoubtedly taken of all the data, and of what was left of the old stronghold, to reproduce as nearly as possible the Pierrefonds of Louis d'Orléans, and the spirit, where the actual individual design was not possible, of a fourteenth century Gothic fortress-chateau.

The huge structure crowns a bluff, itself a natural fortification overlooking many miles of the surrounding country, much of which is covered by the royal forest of Compiègne. And not many miles away, on the other edge of the forest, lies the town of Compiègne with its eighteenth century Renaissance royal chateau. That, too, should be visited for its memories of Louis XV., Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette, Napoleon I., and even Napoleon III. and Eugénie. Very recently, also, another royal visit has honoured Compiègne: that of no less a personage then Nicholas II., Czar of all the Russias. For these associations, as well as for the contrast afforded the bristling towers of Pierrefonds by its long, low façades and unbroken outlines, one should visit Compiègne. Then, after a few hours with the patches and powder, the gallantry and intrigue of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and a due appreciation of one of the finest collections of furniture and tapestries in France, one should drive through the still royally kept avenues and shaded alleys of the forest to Pierrefonds.

A clean little town, now because of certain sulphur springs, something of a watering place, with a Hôtel des Bains, whose attractive grounds border a pretty lake, lies under the fortress-crowned bluff. But once within the great walls, even though to-day white and new, and with interiors still bright from the decorator's hand, the atmosphere of Pierrefonds is of the fourteenth century, suggesting steel-clad knights and armoured horses, and the clumsy machinery of mediæval warfare.

The ground plan of the enclosure is a quadrangle. Exterior walls are of enormous thickness and present few and small openings. They are divided and protected by eight massive circular towers, which rise to a considerable height and end in sharply pointed, cone-shaped roofs. Both walls and towers are machicolated and battlemented, with loopholes between the embrasures of the battlements. The main entrance is guarded by a portcullis and moat, and further protected by a walled-in court. All the exterior walls, except on the side of this court, rise precipitously from the edge of the steep bluff.

The chateau is built around a quadrangular court in which are found the windows which light its various halls and apartments. A number are coupled, with foliations set in their heads, and a few are pointed. One large window is even more than half-filled with Flamboyant tracery. The dormers are surmounted by crocketed gables and finials, and there are traceried balustrades, grotesque gargoyles, heraldic animals, and carved mouldings, all producing a most splendid court. Yet, as nothing is overdone, it has an air of dignified simplicity, often lacking in later work. Its present spick and span newness undoubtedly renders it less impressive than many less pretentious monuments which have the added charm of a picturesque decay and the softened lines and varied tones of green and gold of mouldy walls. But one must reflect that all the great Gothic piles which we know and love in their last and best estate were once, like this, bright and hard and new; and that Pierrefonds will again, in time, acquire that venerable aspect and those softened beauties of line and colour which, but for the violence of man, should be hers to-day.

The chief ornament of the court is the modern bronze equestrian statue which represents the founder, the Duc d'Orleans. In another angle is the entrance to the chapel, with its rose window above. The chapel is small but lofty, with a semicircular apse with Gothic windows. It is painfully new and looks barren and cold.

Of the other apartments shown, the great *Salle des Preuses* is a fine example of an old Gothic hall. Its barrel vault, like the panelled wainscot, is of wood. The wainscot is surmounted by elaborately carved and crocketed Gothic finials, some of which rise to a considerable height and support coloured armorial shields. The walls and the roof are also painted, the latter with simple conventional designs, outlined on the dark wood. The chief feature of the hall, the huge chimney, bears a row of female figures, nearly life size, said to represent the ladies of the chief knights of chivalry, hence the name of the hall.

A smaller hall in another wing is called that of the *Table Rond*. It is appropriately decorated, and the motto of the knights is found in the glass of the windows "*J'ai l'envie*" ("I aspire"). Yet another apartment shows a chimney in whose Gothic carving is found the motto of the House of Orleans, "*Qui veult peut*" ("Who will can"). Below it are the bees of the Bonapartes. One wonders why, until it is remembered that it was Napoleon III. who caused five million francs to be

Chateau, Pierrefonds.

Salle des Preuses.

spent for the restoration of Pierrefonds which probably saved it from utter ruin. Some recognition was undoubtedly due him here; but, somehow, one rather wishes that he had waived such right in what claims to be a mediæval monument. The eagles of Charlemagne, on a wall near by, also look strangely out of place, as those decorative birds are to-day recognized as the especial inheritance of the German nations, the Franks having clung instead to the more prosaic and less picturesque cock of the Gauls. Yet they, too, had their claim to memories of the great mediæval emperor, which Louis d'Orléans may have recalled on the walls of his splendid chateau. The bees, however, have no such excuse, and must seem an unwarrantable intrusion. Napoleon I. made his name great, and Napoleon III. very nearly rebuilt France; but they and their device belong to modern, not to mediæval monuments.

But, after all, while the interior decorations may be pleasing or otherwise, and while they suggest much of splendour and even comfort, as well as great names and epochs, it is the walls themselves, impregnable when erected, that the student goes to Pierrefonds to see; their plan, their construction, and their enormous thickness, all built according to the military science of their day. Behind the battlements, one finds the machicoulis, those holes in the floor between the brackets which support its projection, through which boiling water or hot lead could be poured, or stones dropped upon the heads of the venturesome enemy who came too near. There one may also see the working machinery of the ponderous portcullis, and appreciate the value of the splay, the slant or slope which widens the inner face of openings in the walls. This permitted the grouping, behind every narrow loophole, of several men whose guns could be aimed to cover a wide sweep of the surrounding country. Where most exposed, walls increase to an enormous thickness, while towers project them at every point, and cover every approach. So built, Pierrefonds was impregnable, except by famine or treachery; and so it remained until the sharp crack of explosives sounded the doom of all such piles, and with them, of military architecture as a fine art. To-day such splendid walls have not the practical value of piled-up bags of sand; and towers, battlements, and machicolations have become meaningless ornaments, preserved solely for their picturesque beauty.

For the mediæval life at Pierrefonds, one must rely largely upon one's imagination; for, beyond a few bare facts, we find nothing of importance. The chateau is said to have been completed in 1406, eight years after it was begun; and its builder, the Duc d'Orleans, was assassinated in 1407. That brilliant and unscrupulous prince, therefore, scarcely saw his splendid creation finished. The years following his death were those of the intestine strife produced by the weak rule of the mad king, Charles VI., and of the losing fortunes of the Hundred Years' War. We are told that, after the assassination of the Duc d'Orléans by Jean sans Peur, Charles VI. gave Pierrefonds to the Comte de St. Pol, but later it reverted to the son and heir of its builder, Charles d'Orléans. An incendiary fire, set by the Comte de St. Pol after his expulsion, caused considerable damage to the chateau, which had to be repaired by its new owner. Then came the battle of Agincourt, after which Charles d'Orléans was carried away to his long captivity in London Tower, and in 1410, Pierrefonds itself was besieged by the English. It held out until its supply of food and ammunition, the latter still largely of arrows, stones and hot lead, was exhausted, when it was forced to open its gates to the besieging army. Within two years, however, the chateau was again held by the French, and in 1430, Charles VII. came to Pierrefonds with Joan of Arc.

What happened when Charles d'Orléans came back from his English captivity, ten years later, is not chronicled in accounts at our disposal; but if Pierrefonds descended to his son, as it probably did, it became once more the property of the crown when that son, as Louis XII., became King of France. Nothing further of importance is chronicled at Pierrefonds, until, during the religious wars that preceded the accession of Henry IV., the chateau became the nest of a band of Leaguers. From 1588 to 1594, they were able to hold it, and defied Henry even after he became king. The leader was finally taken and hanged at Compiègne, after which we are told that Henry purchased Pierrefonds, and that he prized it most highly, both as a stronghold and as a place of residence.

During the early years of the next reign, Pierrefonds was held against the king during a petty revolution caused by one of the many meaningless intrigues fomented by Marie de Medicis. The place was then besieged by the Duc d'Angoulême, who employed the severest possible measures against it, said to have been the most terrible to which Pierrefonds had ever been subjected. Gunpowder undoubtedly played a prominent part in his means of offence, and the stronghold was soon obliged to capitulate. Later, its strength was considered a menace to the crown by Richelieu, and its complete demolition ordered. Mines were set under its walls, and every tower was ripped open from top to bottom. This occurred probably about 1620, a reliable exact date seems difficult to find, and for about two hundred and twenty-five years Pierrefonds remained as then ruined.

Those who care for extended views will undoubtedly be repaid by a climb to the top of some of the towers of Pierrefonds; but better than the view from it, is the picture made by the majestic pile itself, especially as seen from the pretty garden of the Hôtel des Bains. There, or at the Hôtel de la Cloche at Compiègne, one may very comfortably spend several days, taking unlimited drives in the magnificent old forest, and enjoying many and various views of the imposing fortress. Here, when those towering walls were new, undoubtedly came the beautiful duchess of Louis d'Orléans, Valentine of Milan, and possibly her rival, the wicked and shameless queen, Isabel of Bavaria. To them, as well as to those who came later, even to Marie de Medicis, the jagged sky line of the bristling towers of Pierrefonds were not so much regarded for their splendour or picturesque beauty as for the fact that they promised safety; for even during times of peace, and until a comparatively late date, brigandage and assassination were only too common.

To-day there are no such picturesque, if uncomfortable possibilities. There is only the clean and sleepy little French town, partially hidden by the rich foliage which clothes the steep bluff; and there is the pretty lake and the endless stretch of the royal forest, all of which forms a quiet and peaceful setting for the warlike old fortress.

Chapter III

LOCHES

"NOW the citadel at Loches is a city within a city, a fortress wrapped round with yet another fortress. But it looks out upon the fairest plain of France, and the grandeur of its aspect is but an accent upon the cruelty of its ancient discipline. To-day it remains a monument to the power and implacability of the fifteenth century. Its cages and *oubliettes* attest the ferocity which governed tyrants when tyranny was a divine right." [1]

Though the chateau of Loches cannot vie in beauty or architectural splendour with many of the other historic chateaux of France, in variety of interest, both historical and architectural, it is second to none. Its confused mass of buildings, which surmount a considerable hill overlooking the winding Indre not many miles from its junction with the Loire, include a tenth century fortress capable of containing twelve hundred men; a twelfth century church; the chateau proper with its Gothic and Renaissance wings; and a great number of lesser buildings which fill with picturesque confusion the wide extent of the enclosure.

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[1] Introduction to Tudor Translation of Philippe de Commines, Charles Whibley.

The earliest foundation at Loches is claimed by some authorities to have been a church, founded by St. Eustache, in 450, before the time of Clovis. Others trace the history of the old donjon tower also, back to the early Merovingian kings; and it is probable that there was an early church, as well as an early fortification, at Loches. But authentic history begins with the replacing of the church of St. Eustache by a new one in 962, and the building or rebuilding at about the same date of the present great keep or donjon by Foulques Nerra, Count of Anjou.

The tenth century was a most picturesque period in France; and that formidable fighter, the Black Count of Anjou, contributed some of its most stirring pages. He was one of those great lords, the counts of Blois, of Chartres, of Tours, of Maine, and many others, who repaired to Senlis in 987, there to swear fealty to Hugh Capet, and to inaugurate a dynasty which was to rule France for nearly a thousand years.

Even before Foulques Nerra, the counts of Anjou had begun to play an important part in the history of France. The first of this remarkable line of princes was Foulques the Red, whose date is about

850, and whose kingdom of Anjou, a small strip of territory lying between the Loire, the Sarthe, and the Mayenne, had been given to the counts of Anjou by Odo, Comte de Paris. All the successors of the Red Count, except Foulques the Good, showed unwearying activity in enlarging this domain. But it was Foulques Nerra, the Black Falcon, who made of it a powerful kingdom, and who built fortresses which dominated long stretches of the Loire. His valour as a fighter and his ability as a leader, have left legends of his prowess all over Touraine, some of which attribute to him a dark connection with the powers of the lower world.

Another count of Anjou, Foulques Réchin (the Brawler), was not the rightful heir, but he seized the duchy and kept his nephew imprisoned for many years. He won an unenviable notoriety through his wife, the famous Bertrade, who was taken from him by the king, Philip I. The latter, for love of her, plunged all France into misery for many years. Philip found a priest to marry him to Bertrade, but the Pope would not recognise the union; and the last weapon of the papacy, the interdict, laid upon the nation the penalty of the sin committed by its sovereign.

The days of Foulques Réchin were shameful ones for Anjou as well as for France; but, in the last years of the eleventh century, another Foulques, or Fulk, was to mend its fortunes, first by his own marriage with the heiress of Maine, and later by the royal marriages of his children. His daughter was the ill-fated bride of William the Aetheling and with that unfortunate prince went down in the "White Ship" whose loss in the channel is one of the tragic episodes in history. The princess Matilda then became the heiress to the English crown; and again a royal alliance was formed by Fulk of Anjou in the marriage of his son Geoffrey, called Plantagenet, with her. At the death of Fulk, therefore, when Geoffrey became Duke of Anjou, Anjou and Maine were added to Normandy as continental possessions of the kingdom founded in England by William the Conqueror; and Henry II., son of Geoffrey and Matilda, became the first Plantagenet king of England.

The accession of Henry II. was long disputed in England, but he was possessed of many of the qualities of his Angevine ancestors. Like the Black Count, Henry was an obstinate fighter and keen and calculating in his policy. He, therefore, not only conquered his island kingdom after he inherited it, but held all of his continental possessions in a firm grip. Anjou, the cradle of his race, was especially dear to him; and he spent much time at Chinon, another fortress on the Loire which owes much to Foulques Nerra.

There was pretty constant fighting with France, from the time these fair provinces, which naturally belonged to her, were added to England, which was to continue until Philip Augustus wrested the last of them from the weak hand of John Lackland. This warfare surged up and down the valley of the Loire, breaking, wave after wave, against the strong castles built by Foulques Nerra. During the captivity of Richard the Lion-heart, the province of Anjou was ravaged by Philip Augustus and Loches was taken by the French. But, immediately upon his release, Richard appeared in Touraine, recaptured Loches and well nigh took Blois as well. This occurred in 1193. The English grip, however, was broken. Richard, himself, had no staying qualities, and soon lost his life in a useless adventure. In 1199, he was succeeded by his shifty and unscrupulous brother; and in 1205, Loches was again in the hands of Philip Augustus, finally and permanently lost to England. It was at first bestowed as a reward upon the Constable of France, but later reverted to the crown. Under Louis IX. it became a royal chateau of France, but from its siege and capture by Philip Augustus there is little of interest at Loches until we come to the reign of Charles VII.

Of important buildings at Loches, inherited by Charles VII., which remain to us to-day, there were only two; the great donjon of Foulques Nerra, and the church of St. Ours, the third upon the site of that founded by St. Eustache in 450. The latter was begun under Henry II., in 1180, and is therefore a monument of the English period. To these, and doubtless many lesser buildings, Charles added a Gothic tower, which, with the buildings already mentioned, form the attraction at Loches to-day.

The huge donjon is still the most conspicuous feature of the fortress-chateau. It is square and rises to a height of one hundred and twenty-eight feet. Its walls, eleven feet thick, and now empty, are of even and perfect masonry, and supported by round buttresses. There are also a few round-headed windows. Certain features of the construction of this donjon are said to resemble those of the White Tower in London, and the castles of Rochester and Newcastle.

The church of St. Ours stands nearly in the middle of the enclosure, lying between the old fortress and the tower of Charles VII. It does not dominate the entire landscape, as does the donjon; but as seen from one side of the hill, its curious outline must at once command attention, for it is one of the most remarkable architectural monuments in France. It is Romanesque in all its details, with a most magnificent Romanesque portal. Both the exterior and interior present a massive and solid construction, and all matters of detail have a severe and dignified beauty. Openings are round headed, and the general effect is of early Norman Romanesque.

The unique, almost bizarre, feature of the church is the roof of the nave, to which M. Viollet-le-Duc refers when he says, "In France, exactly upon the border-line which separates buildings with cupolas from those with none, there is a strange and unique monument, in which the influences of Oriental art are blended with the methods of construction adopted in the north at the beginning of the twelfth century. This is the collegiate church at Loches; a monument unique in the world, perfect of its kind, and of a savage beauty." "Savage" exactly expresses the two bristling pyramids which cover this nave. It is true that, like the softly curving domes of the south, they divide its length into square sections; and that they are supported between the arches by a construction resembling pendentives. But, like the tall spires of the north, they are carried steeply up to sharp points. They are hollow also, being mere shells, though of solid, splendid masonry. The interior effect is decidedly gruesome, and calculated, as Cook says, "to inspire a vague feeling of terror." That of the exterior is fantastic and barbaric in the extreme; the two pyramids, together with the spires, producing a jagged sky line which one could scarcely desire to see frequently repeated.

The splendid Romanesque portal is now covered by a portico. Its carved figures are stiff and archaic, and most curiously arranged. They are apparently re-used from an earlier structure, and still betray marked evidences of colour. Altogether, it is one of the most picturesque architectural bits in Europe, and consequently frequently surrounded by its group of sketchers.

The tower of Charles VII. stands back the width of a paved terrace from the wall which overlooks the town. It is Gothic, with round buttresses which are really small towers. It has a large round tower; a steep roof; and battlements which are to-day simply a cornice, but which originally may have been constructed for use. The many and large windows also are evidently more modern than the walls. Very probably they were cut when Louis XII. erected the Renaissance wing which continues this building along the terrace.

The tower of Charles VII. is chiefly famous to-day as the residence for so many years of Agnes Sorel; a woman who, if reports be true, played a part second only to that of Joan of Arc in the life of that king. Notwithstanding her position, she has long been considered wise, gentle, and amiable, and a woman of marked purity of character; and she undoubtedly furnished the resolution and incentive which aroused the king from the lethargy and inaction of his earlier years. It is said to have been at the instigation of Agnes that Charles undertook that tardy justice to Joan of Arc, which finally resulted in what was called her rehabilitation and canonization. Such was the reputation of Agnes Sorel in her own day. A hundred years later, Francis I. was inspired to write the following gallant lines in her praise:

> "If to win back poor captive France be aught,
> More honour, gentle Agnes, is thy meed,
> Than ere was due to deeds of virtue wrought
> By cloistered nun or pious hermit breed."

Agnes Sorel was greatly devoted to the church of St. Ours, making large gifts to it during her life, and leaving to its chapter rich bequests, with the request that her body should rest within its walls. Her tomb was therefore placed there; but after the death of her royal lover, scruples were suddenly developed, owing to the impurity of her life, as to the propriety of its remaining in so sacred a place. The matter came to the attention of the king, then Louis XI., who could not be expected to feel much kindness for his mother's rival. He, however, secured to Agnes Sorel her desired resting-place by claiming the reversion of her bequests should the body be removed, slyly remarking that her gifts must also be unworthy if her tomb violated the sanctity of the church. As a consequence, it remained as originally placed until the Revolution, when, like all those in any way associated with royalty, it was violated. The monument was preserved, though somewhat mutilated, and later was removed to the tower in which she lived and where it may now be seen. The effigy of white limestone is exceedingly simple and pure in style, and represents the "*Belle des Belles*" as of a delicate type of beauty. Her feet rest upon the lambs that suggest her name, and further emphasise the impression of innocence and youth, as well as the gentleness and amiability which are her traditional characteristics.

From the very beginning, the old fortress at Loches was frequently used as a prison, but its most gruesome and tragic memories are of the reign of Louis XI. This king built two round towers to add to the security and capacity of its dungeons; and so many were the victims sent there by him, that the memory of his reign rests like a dark shadow upon Loches. Louis XI., notwithstanding his able statesmanship and the clever apologies of his historian Commines, was a tyrant of tyrants, and his cruelties well nigh blot out all brighter memories at Loches.

The most famous prisoner of Louis XI. was his once trusted secretary, Jean Balue, later the Cardinal d'Angiers, who was accused of treason, and for whom his royal master caused to be constructed the famous iron cage, said to be the one still pointed out in one of the dungeons. Of these cages, Commines says, "Moreover, he had caused divers cruel prisons to be made, as, for example, cages, being eight feet square, and one foot more than a man's height, some of iron and some of wood. He that first devised them was the Bishop of Verdun, who incontinent was himself put into the first that he made, where he remained fourteen years. Many have cursed him for this device, among them myself, for I lay in one of them under the king that now reigneth (Charles VIII.) the space of eight months."

Many of the favourites and officers of Louis XI. failed to find favour with his successor, Charles VIII., and, among others of the earlier régime, Commines was sent to Loches. His imprisonment was short, as he himself tells us; and after his release he was able to continue his admirable memoirs.

The most famous prisoner of Charles VIII. was Ludovico Sforza, the brilliant Italian *condottiere* and one-time master of Milan, who was kept for ten years in one of the worst of the dungeons of Loches, and died there. Louis, Duc d'Orléans, later Louis XII., also made the acquaintance of the *oubliettes* at Loches during this reign. He, being the next in succession to the crown, it was easy to suspect him of treason. It is said that he purchased his freedom by successfully negotiating the marriage of the young king with Anne of Brittany, with whom he himself, at that time, became enamoured.

A later famous prisoner was Jean de Poitiers, Seigneur de St. Vallier, who was sent to Loches by

Francis I. He was implicated in the treason of the Duc de Bourbon, and would probably have suffered the extreme penalty but for the tears and prayers of his beautiful daughter, Diane de Poitiers, who is said to have found favour with the king while pleading for her father's life. It is interesting to note, in this connection, as has been said elsewhere, that the husband found for this famous beauty, Louis de Brézé, was a descendant of Charles VII. and Agnes Sorel.

The dungeons at Loches are mostly underground, and many of them are down what seem to be interminable stairs. In a number of them inscriptions are found, traced, it is said, by despairing captives. In that once occupied by Sforza, the walls show traces of colour, the remains of rude sketches made by the prisoner to lighten the tedium of his interminable days. The most pitiful of all is the tiny square evidently traced to outline the only spot on his wall ever touched by daylight.

Louis XII. was the last builder at Loches, and his work is an addition to the chateau of Charles VII. The main lines of the Gothic tower are followed in this later wing, but there are no towers or battlements; and, while much of the detail is still Gothic, the spirit of the Renaissance is here, and it is usually designated as a Renaissance wing. These are, partially at least, exterior walls; and they are not planned for defence. The large windows are regularly spaced, and similar ones are cut in the adjoining wall of Charles VII. There is a certain degree of uniformity, therefore, in the long façade which overlooks the town; and the two wings form what is to-day, properly speaking, the chateau of Loches.

As many of the apartments are now occupied by the Sous Prefect of the district, only a few are shown; and of those only one is of great interest. Entrance to that may be found under the enormous chestnut-tree of Francis I. in the garden in the rear. There, after climbing a narrow stair, we find the tiny oratory of Anne of Brittany, for whom the wing of Louis XII. was probably built. The walls of the oratory are covered all over with the heraldic emblazonments of this queen; the cords and ermine tails, the especial devices of the House of Brittany. The cords or cordeliers are said to have been adopted by certain dukes of Brittany to mark their attachment to St. Francis of Assisi who wore a rope for his girdle. We are told that during the life of her first husband, Charles VIII., Anne of Brittany founded an honourable order of women whose badge was the cordelier.

The figure known in heraldry as the ermine, or the ermine tail, was the ancient device of the House of Brittany. It was originally represented in black upon a white ground, to indicate the black-tipped tail upon the white body of the ermine. It undoubtedly symbolised purity, as the motto of the counts of Brittany reads "Death rather than a stain." In honour of the Breton queen, these ermine tails were for many years freely mingled with the lilies of France in royal heraldry; and both the ermine and the cordelier are emblazoned upon many of the chateaux of Touraine.

Anne of Brittany probably made frequent sojourns at Loches; and Louis XII. undoubtedly went there with his third wife, the vivacious young beauty, Mary of England. But after that reign the court came less and less frequently to Loches. Other chateaux were growing so much finer, and also so much more comfortable, that Loches became only an occasional stopping-place. Francis I. once entertained Charles V. there, and the wedding festivities which followed the romantic wooing of James V. of Scotland and the fair Madeleine of France are said to have been celebrated at Loches. This lovely and charming daughter of Francis I. soon fell a victim to the rigours of the Scotch climate; and her lover-husband married for a second wife Mary of Guise, whose daughter, the famous Marie Stuart, brought back to France the charm, if not the guilelessness, attributed to the love of her father's youth.

Later than Francis I. there is little mention of Loches in the court life of France, and from that date it ceased to figure as important either as a chateau or a fortress.

Chapter IV

LANGEAIS

THE walls and towers of the chateau of Langeais rise from the midst of the little town of the same name, which lies on the north bank of the Loire, a few miles below Tours. Here in early days was another of those fortresses built by Foulques Nerra, the ruins of whose donjon may still be seen, and whose history recalls many of the names already mentioned in connection with Loches; for the lords of Loches were the lords of Langeais as well.

Langeais, like Loches, was held first by the counts of Anjou and then by their descendants, the kings of England; and, like Loches, it was taken from John Lackland by Philip Augustus. It will be remembered that after John Lackland had seized the English throne, he was charged with the murder of the rightful heir, the little Arthur of Brittany; because of which crime, all of his continental possessions were declared confiscated by Philip Augustus. This occurred in 1203; and before his death, in 1216, King John had managed to lose all his possessions on the French side of the channel. Some strongholds, like Loches, yielded only after a siege; but Langeais had been held for Arthur of Brittany, and Philip was able to gain possession of it by arranging an exchange with its owner.

The next few years of the history of Langeais are confusing and not important; but in 1218, two years after the death of King John, the chateau passed, curiously enough, into the hands of Hugh de Lusignan, Comte de la Marche, who had already married Isabella, the widowed queen of the English king. This fickle beauty had been affianced in her youth to the Comte de la Marche, and had even been delivered over to him to be educated; but she had been carried off (not unwillingly, it was said) by King John, who had been suddenly enamoured of her when she had been sent by her parents to do homage to him for their domain of Angoulême. It is most probable that her parents were not blameless, and Isabella was undoubtedly quite willing to become queen of England; but Hugh had been much attached to his youthful fiancée, and became the bitter enemy of the perfidious John. He challenged him to a mortal combat; and when King John excused himself on the ground of his rank, Hugh took the first opportunity to overrun certain of the English king's continental possessions.

During the struggle that ensued Hugh was at one time taken prisoner, and treated with the greatest indignity, being fettered hand and foot and paraded in a cart through Normandy. Later, when set free by the payment of a heavy ransom, and when John's power was weakened by his shifting policy and personal unpopularity, Hugh, then again in arms against him, was propitiated by the promise of the princess royal, Joanna, daughter of John and Isabella. But after the death of John, when the Comte de la Marche found that the fickle but still fair Isabella could be persuaded to console him for his long bachelorhood, her daughter was set aside, and she finally became the Comtesse de la Marche.

Isabella was an ambitious and not a very wise woman, as is proved by her career in England; and Hugh probably found his long-deferred happiness not altogether unalloyed. His countess was the dowager queen of England with a son upon that throne. It was hardly to be expected, then, that she would rest content as a subject of France; and she lost no time in inciting her husband to revolt against the French king, Louis IX., with the purpose of transferring his allegiance to the king of England. Isabella even plotted against the life of King Louis, but the treason was discovered and the plot frustrated. And, though much was forgiven, Langeais was again confiscated by the French crown. Isabella fled to the convent of Fontevraud, where the nuns hid her in a secret chamber where she died a few weeks later. She is said to have died acknowledging her many sins, requesting to be humbly buried in the churchyard. Her request was complied with; but a few years later her body was removed into the choir of the church, and an exquisitely beautiful tomb given it by the order of her son, Henry III. of England. The recumbent figure of the countess-queen is very beautiful; and to those who are interested in thirteenth century costumes the dress is well worthy of study.

In 1272 Langeais came into the possession of Pierre de la Brosse, the servant (some say the barber) of Louis IX., but who later was the favourite and minister of Philip III. This man became implicated in court intrigues, and was finally hanged for treason, when his property was confiscated. But before that event certain changes had taken place at Langeais; though exactly what they were, or even what the chateau was when it came into the possession of Pierre de la Brosse, is difficult to discover. During his period of ownership, there are accounts of the introduction of what were esteemed luxuries at Langeais, and Pierre de la Brosse was a marked figure of his time. He was rich and powerful; and as old fortresses were beginning to be considered unsuitable for places of residence, it is not improbable that new buildings were begun at Langeais before his death. Only a bare beginning could have been made, however, for the valley of the Loire was soon given up to the hundred years of war with England. During that long struggle, Langeais was taken and retaken by both English and French; and at its close it remained in the hands of the English until purchased by the subsidies of the citizens of Touraine.

In 1464, the chateau, as it stands to-day, was begun by Jean Briçonnet under the care of Jean Bourrée, minister of Louis XI. and governor of Langeais. The latter also superintended the building of the more famous chateau of Plessis lez Tours, now destroyed, but which Langeais is said to resemble. Of the chateau of Langeais, Mrs. Mark Pattison says, "It is one of the finest existing examples of a French castle built about the middle of the fifteenth century." "It is a fortress of the Middle Ages, but it bears upon its walls the traces of the coming change. The problem which the architect at Langeais had to solve, was how to conciliate the necessities of defence with the already increasing demands of domestic life." Unable or unwilling to omit the old means of defence; the round towers, the portcullis and machicolated battlements; no account seems to have been made of the new means of warfare, gunpowder, which rendered such features useless. The battlements are roofed over, however, making a continuous covered passage the entire extent of the exterior wall, and in the court this feature, the battlement, becomes a cornice. This development of the cornice out of the battlement was one of the first notes of the change of the mediæval fortress into a modern residence.

The construction at Langeais is massive, with little or no ornamentation. The interior arrangements are simple, and that of the ground floor is repeated on each floor above. All roofs are sharply pointed, and the many round towers are covered with the conical extinguishers so distinctive a feature of French Gothic domestic architecture.

Langeais, like Pierrefonds, has been magnificently restored. But Langeais has also been judiciously and richly furnished by its present owner, M. Jean Jacques Siegfried. Not only has no expense been spared in this work, but marked taste and discretion have been exercised, with the result that at Langeais one finds the picturesque and living background of mediæval life. The huge chimneys, settles, tables, chairs, and canopied beds are Gothic. The wainscotted and frescoed walls and ceilings have suitable and appropriate decorations. The colouring has everywhere been chosen with rare discretion, making of Langeais a harmonious and perfect picture of a fifteenth century royal chateau. Very much as it looks now, it may have appeared in 1491, when Anne of Brittany came to Langeais to be married to Charles VIII., a ceremony which gives the old chateau its chief historical fame.

The great hall where this most interesting ceremony occurred is now the splendid salon of Langeais. It is magnificent in length, breadth, and height, with an enormous chimney at one end, and carved Gothic seats along the walls. Here Charles first met his Breton duchess, who though a little lame, and nowhere, except in the fulsome pages of Brantôme, described as beautiful, must have possessed a calm and dignified carriage and considerable personal fascination.

Charles is described as "plain of visage, with great eyes that seemed to see but weakly, an aquiline nose too large for his face, and thick lips always open, slow of speech, and with certain nervous movements in his hands." Judging from this unflattering picture and the weak and inefficient reign of Charles, who accomplished nothing for France besides this marriage, Anne was a much more attractive figure than her husband, as well as a stronger character. Her kingdom of Brittany was a most valuable acquisition to France, and she knew it. She therefore stipulated a marriage contract to her liking, and adopted a tone of equality with the king which, for the first time, made the queen of France a figure of importance.

The dress of Anne upon this occasion was an under-robe, with long sleeves, of fine Holland linen, an open petticoat sloping back from the waist, with a girdle knotted into a purse from the hips. Added to this was an outer robe with large sleeves, with richly embroidered girdle and pendent rosary, a collar of gold and precious stones finished with lace, and a hood of satin.

Charles had been advised to look well at the bottom of her robe to discover whether his young bride really had one foot shorter than the other, but Anne disguised her infirmity very cleverly. The king is said to have been well pleased to find her pretty and agreeable, as well as good, charitable, virtuous, wise, honest, and gentle, and possessed of a subtile wit.

Anne's life, as queen, was largely spent in the valley of the Loire, for, until the reign of Francis I., the court rarely went to Paris, and Tours was really the royal city of France; consequently, one is constantly reminded of her in Touraine and along the banks of the Loire. Besides possessing the long list of virtues already enumerated, Queen Anne was an enlightened patroness of the fine arts. Two of the most beautiful monuments in France were made for her by Colombe, the leader of the Renaissance movement in French sculpture and forerunner of Jean Goujon. One of these monuments is the magnificent tomb erected by Anne to her parents at Nantes, and the other is that exquisite gem, the tiny tomb of her two children in the cathedral at Tours.

After its rebuilding for Louis XI., by Jean Bourrée, Langeais presents a checkered and, with the exception of the famous marriage, not a very interesting history. It was at one time the property of the famous Bastard of the Orleans family, the Comte de Dunois, and later of an illegitimate branch of the House of Bourbon. During the reign of Louis XIII., it was occupied for a time by the widowed Marie de Balzac d'Entraigues, mother of the famous Henrietta d'Entraigues. Later the domain reverted to Louise de Lorraine, daughter of that Duc de Guise who was assassinated at Blois by Henry III.; and later still it came into the possession of Cinq Mars.

During the early years of the reign of Louis XIV., the all powerful Mazarin gave Langeais to his niece, Hortense Mancini, upon the occasion of her marriage with Arman Charles de la Porte who received also the title of Duc de Mazarin. The descendants of this marriage retained Langeais until the beginning of the nineteenth century, since which time it has passed by purchase through a number of hands. The present owner, M. Siegfried, purchased it in 1886.

Chapter V

CHAUMONT

THE chateau of Chaumont occupies a bluff overlooking the broad basin of the Loire a few miles below Blois and about twice as far above Tours. The situation is one of the most pleasing in all that charming region, and commands long reaches of the winding river. Here again we are reminded of the counts of Anjou and their descendants, the kings of England; for Chaumont was an early outpost of the counts of Blois, and a border castle of France. As such, it was frequently attacked in early days by the counts of Anjou, and later was the scene of many struggles between the kings of England and France.

During these struggles, Chaumont frequently changed hands. It was in the hands of the English in 1169, when Henry II. met Thomas à Becket there for the last time before the murder of the latter. The same king is said, at some time, to have had the old chateau razed to the ground, but there is no very clear account of when or how many times Chaumont was rebuilt; in fact, nothing further of importance is recorded until the fifteenth century, during the reign of Louis XI.

Then we find Chaumont in the possession of the family of Amboise, one of whom, Pierre, after aiding and abetting the treasonable schemes of Louis XI., when dauphin, undoubtedly counted upon the lasting favour of that prince. But when he was so unwise as to oppose the despotic Louis, as king, the fleeting nature of royal gratitude was immediately exemplified in his disgrace and the destruction of his chateau.

The fortunes of the family of Amboise suffered only a temporary eclipse; for Pierre had two sons, one of whom, Charles, rebuilt the chateau, and the other, Georges, became the trusted adviser and prime minister of Louis XII., and was probably the ablest man of that reign in France.

Georges d'Amboise was born at Chaumont, in 1460, just one year before the accession of Louis XI. And the summary destruction visited upon his home by that arbitrary sovereign, doubtless gave him his first and most valuable lesson in mediæval statecraft,—namely, never to oppose the will of an absolute ruler. At any rate, he developed a policy much more supple than that of his more downright father, and became one of the leading diplomatists of his day in Europe. His chief personal service to Louis XII. was the arrangement of the divorce from the princess Jeanne, which enabled that king to marry the widowed queen of his predecessor, Anne of Brittany. His reward was a cardinal's hat, the highest dignity ever attained by the family of Amboise.

The Charles d'Amboise who began the rebuilding of his father's chateau was the elder brother of the Cardinal Georges. We are told that Louis XI. so far repented himself of his severity to his once devoted follower that he defrayed a large part of the expense of the construction of the new chateau of Chaumont. How much was accomplished by this first Charles d'Amboise, or when he was succeeded by his son of the same name, it is difficult to say. Charles d'Amboise the elder was born between 1450 and 1460, and any work paid for by Louis XI. was probably done before his death in 1483. We also hear of a visit paid to Chaumont by Louis XII. and Anne of Brittany the date of which could not have been later than 1495. The body of the new chateau must have been completed, therefore, before the beginning of the sixteenth century; and the statement made by both Mrs. Mark Pattison and Theodore Andrea Cook, that Chaumont is the work of Philibert de l'Orme, whose earliest possible date is 1531, must refer to later additions or some embellishment added for the second Charles d'Amboise.

Just what these may have been is another matter for conjecture; for all features of any importance at Chaumont have the character of earlier work than anything else attributed to De l'Orme, who was an architect of the early Renaissance. Its main entrance is still guarded by round towers, portcullis, and drawbridge; and, while in detail it has less the appearance of a fortress than Pierrefonds, Chaumont has nowhere the classical features found in De l'Orme's work at Chenonceaux and Anet. If architectural development ever proceeded along a regular and unbroken course, we should say that Chaumont, as it stands to-day, was the work of the later years of the fifteenth century; that it stands midway between Langeais (1464) and Chenonceaux (1515); and that De l'Orme had no part in it.

The walls and the ground plan of Chaumont are still fundamentally those of a Gothic fortress. Each angle is covered by its round tower; and, before the wing facing the river was thrown down in the early years of the eighteenth century, its four wings surrounded a court. There is an overhanging battlemented gallery; but, like that at Langeais, it is roofed over, making a continuous covered passage which crowns the full extent of the outer wall. Roofs are steep, those of the towers sharply pointed; and the skyline, as is usual in Gothic work, is exceedingly broken and irregular.

The court, now open towards the river, and commanding a most charming prospect, shows a preponderating Gothic influence. In fact, even here it is difficult to find any distinctly Renaissance work, unless it be the very rich cornice under the Flamboyant tracery of the gallery that guards the upper windows and the delicate carving surrounding some of the windows and set into the panelled buttresses.

The heraldic emblazonments at Chaumont are not only exceedingly decorative, but serve to recall much of the history of the chateau. A broad, continuous band on the exterior wall bears, alternately, interlaced C's and a cone-shaped figure. The C's are the cipher of Charles d'Amboise, Charles of Chaumont. The cone-shaped figure is his device. It represents a burning mount, the *"chaud mont,"* from which the chateau takes its name.

In many places are carved cardinal's hats, referring, of course, to the honour attained by Georges d'Amboise, and in the court there is a porcupine, the especial device of the House of Orleans, carved to do honour to Louis XII., or in memory of his visit. Certain cabalistic signs on one of the towers are said to have been placed there by Catherine de Medicis, who, during her ownership, spent occasional nights there in company with her astrologer. In many places are found interlaced H's and D's, with crescents and other emblems of the goddess Diana, which recall the ownership of Catherine's long-time rival, Diane de Poitiers. It is possible here, as in some other chateaux, that some of the D's may have been intended for C's, as Queen

Catherine was in the habit of interlacing her initial with the H of her husband, and her cipher frequently appears near that of Henry and Diana, when it is often difficult to distinguish one from the other.

The chateau of Chaumont came into the possession of Queen Catherine in 1550. We are told that the second Charles d'Amboise died without direct heirs, and that his estate passed into the hands of a cousin who sold it to the queen for one hundred and twenty thousand livres. It is probable that Catherine purchased it in order to provide herself with a chateau in Touraine, which should, in some degree, rival the much envied possession of Diana, Chenonceaux. Then, in 1559, when the death of the king threw everything into Catherine's hands, she was able to go a step further, and force an exchange which gave her Chenonceaux, and Diana, Chaumont. Why both should have found the chateau on the Cher so much more desirable than the one on the Loire is difficult to say. To-day, in the opinion of many, Chaumont is much more attractive. It stands higher, commands much finer views, and, while it is not so richly decorated as the other, its interior arrangement is far more picturesque.

In 1560, however, Chenonceaux was newer, and represented the new Renaissance movement in architecture, then very much the fashion in France.

Owing to its unique situation, also, it early acquired a sort of romantic interest which long gave it a fictitious value. It was a kind of fairy abode; an enchanted palace. Furthermore, it is quite in accordance with the laws of human nature that when Henry gave Chenonceaux to Diana, Catherine immediately desired it and that she proceeded to take it just as soon as her accession to power permitted.

Only one tower, that to the right of the entrance, remains at Chaumont as the result of Catherine's ten years of ownership. Of the succeeding years of Diane de Poitiers, we find even less; nothing but her cipher with that of her royal lover, and the various devices of the goddess Diana, already alluded to, which still appear in the interior decorations, as well as upon the exterior of the chateau. It is probable that Diana cared little for Chaumont and that she rarely visited it. She had other and much finer chateaux, and would naturally much prefer the splendours of Anet, then recently built for her by Philibert de l'Orme, to an estate which must always remind her of the loss of her much prized Chenonceaux. Shortly after her accession to its ownership, the Prince de Condé was imprisoned at Chaumont. This occurred after he was taken prisoner at the battle of Dreux, in 1562, but why Diana should have loaned her chateau for a prison for a Huguenot leader we are not informed.

Upon the death of Diane de Poitiers, Chaumont passed into the hands of her eldest daughter, Francoise de Brézé, Duchesse de Bouillon, following whom, we find a long list of owners. A few came into possession by inheritance, but the estate appears to have been frequently sold. No names of great consequence occur in the list, and after it passed out of the hands of Queen Catherine, Chaumont never again became a royal chateau. Visitors of note are occasionally mentioned, among them, Cinq Mars who came to Chaumont with a few of his fellow courtiers shortly before he fell a victim to the vengeance of Richelieu, in 1642. And in 1700, the chateau was honoured by a royal visit, that of Philip V. of Spain.

During the reign of Louis XVI., we find Chaumont in the possession of a M. Leray, who, if we may judge from the few facts in our possession, was a man of advanced ideas in his day and generation. He first founded at Chaumont a manufactory of Italian porcelain or pottery. Then we are told that he became much interested in Benjamin Franklin, whom he met in Paris, and from whom he received a visit at his chateau. Whether M. Leray inherited large means, or found Italian pottery a paying industry, is not recorded, but he appears to have been rich and philanthropic, as well as democratic in his ideas. We read next that he sent a ship, armed and furnished at his own expense, for the defence of American liberty. Later, his son came to America, where he is said to have attempted to found a colony on the borders of the Ohio, under the name of Chaumont.

The family of Leray retained possession of Chaumont for many years, and that they were people of some social importance is evidenced by a list of their guests. Voltaire is said to have written a part of "La Pucelle" under their roof, and when Napoleon banished Madame de Staël from Paris, it was a M. Leray who offered her an asylum at Chaumont. It is to be hoped that he found the clever but opinionated bluestocking more agreeable than did Napoleon, to whom, in both appearance and manner, she was absolutely unendurable, and who considered her a most interfering and mischievous member of society. She was followed to Chaumont by a number of friends, among them Benjamin Constant and Madame Récamier. And to-day Chaumont is owned and occupied by a great grandson of Madame de Staël, Henri Amédée, Duc de Broglie.

Chaumont is not large, and should not be compared, either in size or splendour, with many of the royal chateaux of France. Nevertheless, the grace and dignity of its lines, and the extreme beauty of its setting give it a place of honour among them all. With its other attractions it also has the additional charm, now entirely lacking in many more pretentious chateaux, of rich and tasteful living.

In the apartments now shown to the public, through the courtesy of its owner, are to be seen rare tapestries and rich furnishings, many of them historic, and some having associations with the chateau itself or with the astute Catharine or wily Diana. The richly carved chairs and settles are black with age; a splendid bed is not only elaborately carved but furnished with silken embroidered stuffs, magnificent even in their present state of fade and decay. It is said to have been once occupied by Catherine de Medicis, and a so-called portrait of her astrologer, Ruggieri, hangs near by. The old floors of red tiles are oiled and polished to the ruddiest shade of terra cotta; the black beams of the ceiling of one chamber bear the crescents and hunting horns, the bows and arrows of Diana. Priceless tapestries cover many of the walls, and narrow Gothic windows give occasional glimpses of sunny hillsides or the winding river. Everything within and without unites in producing that atmosphere of rich colour, and historic beauty, which are the essence of the attraction of Chaumont to-day. All is peaceful, harmonious, beautiful. Portcullis and bristling towers hint of mediæval savagery, but their usefulness had well nigh departed even before they were built, and their service has never been more practical than it is to-day, when they add the last felicitous touch, the crowning and picturesque charm to Chaumont.

Chapter VI

AMBOISE

THE royal chateau of Amboise crowns a steep and high bluff which overhangs and dominates the Loire about half way between Blois and Tours. A charming excursion may be made to it from either point, an excursion which might include Chaumont as well, by way of the river road which follows the course of the winding stream. For a view of the chateau, however, one should approach it by the bridge which connects Amboise with the railroad station on the opposite bank. It is a very long bridge, divided into two spans by an island, and its entire length is not only dominated by the chateau-crowned bluff, but it furnishes what is practically its only point of view. From it the huge, round tower and stretch of gray walls, whose foundations lie at the very base of the bluff, seem to rise directly from the water's edge. The sheer cliff of masonry is most imposing and impressive, and, notwithstanding a short stretch of open galleries and wide windows above, Amboise is still a mediæval fortress of enormous strength.

Very little, if any, of the chateau as it stands to-day is earlier than the reign of Charles VIII., but the site recalls many long and interesting pages of history before that date. The military value of the position will be seen at a glance. The island, even before the construction of a bridge, made it a convenient point for crossing the river, and such crossing could always be prevented or protected from the bluff. The latter was therefore undoubtedly fortified from the very earliest times. According to tradition, a camp was established here by Julius Cæsar, and there can be no doubt that it was long held by the Romans. Then, when the Roman power began to weaken, we are told that one Maximus, who was captain of Amboise, gave it with his daughter in marriage to a king of Brittany, from whom it descended to King Arthur. And he, before he sailed away to the Isle of Avalon, gave it to the Franks.

So far, the story of Amboise is pure tradition, but, not long after the days of King Arthur, we begin to encounter reasonably well authenticated facts. Upon the little island at Amboise, Clovis is said to have made a treaty with a Visigothic king: this doubtless when he was pushing those tribes of barbarians to the south. By 540, Amboise had been ceded to the archbishop of Tours, who held it under the Frankish kings. Next, we hear that it was ruined by the Normans who early began to invade the newly acquired dominions of the Franks by way of their great rivers. They not only threw down the fortress, but destroyed the bridge already built to connect it with the opposite bank of the river. Then, we are told of a certain Hughes, called Hughes I., Lord of Amboise, who, in 1115, rebuilt both castle and bridge, and who established his power on so solid a foundation that the domain remained to his descendants for three and a half centuries.

For a part of this time the lords of Amboise paid fealty to the powerful counts of Anjou, holding and protecting for them the lower reaches of the Loire, against the counts of Blois whose stronghold at Chaumont commanded the upper river. This petty intestine strife between two lords of France became international warfare when the counts of Anjou ascended the throne of England, and much of the later struggle centred in the valley of the Loire and around Amboise. We read of Henry II. and Thomas à Becket at Amboise as well as at Chaumont, but under Philip Augustus, if not earlier, the lords of Amboise had returned to their allegiance to the kings of France.

Two hundred years later, during the Hundred Years' War, their loyalty was again to be tested, and again to be found wanting, for, during the long period when the fortunes of war were all running against the French, the lords of Amboise with some others, were thought to have yielded a too ready allegiance to the English. After the expulsion of the English, in 1431, therefore, Louis d'Amboise was accused of treason to the crown and condemned to death. This sentence was later commuted to a confiscation of his property, but the loss of it was made especially grievous by its being made a gift to his bitterest enemy, a favourite of the king. Then, upon the death of this favourite, it reverted to the crown.

This reversion occurred during the reign of the king who had confiscated Amboise, Charles VII., and for many hundreds of years it was to remain crown property. At first it was little regarded except as a fortification, and beyond strengthening its walls, Charles VII. did nothing for it. Under Louis XI. it began to assume greater importance, and very early became a royal residence. Indeed, it is very probable that Louis XI., when dauphin, may have resided there for a time, for the town of Amboise always showed great devotion to him and arranged famous shows and festivals to celebrate his accession. As king, Louis XI. was usually found at Plessis lez Tours; but his son, who became Charles VIII., was born at Amboise, and it was there that Louis founded his famous military order of St. Michel.

The founding of orders of knighthood as a means of binding choice spirits to their service was a favourite device of the kings of Europe during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. The best-known are the Order of the Garter in England; that of the Golden Fleece, founded in Burgundy; and the French Order of St. Michel. The first dates from the fourteenth, the other two from the fifteenth century.

The foundation of the Order of St. Michel by Louis XI. followed very closely the end of the Hundred Years' War. Being dedicated to the warrior archangel, it was doubtless intended to commemorate and glorify the long struggle, as well as to claim the continued fidelity of those who had earned or inherited names famous for military prowess. The institution of the order occurred in 1469, at which time the first chapter was held. No later chapter, however, was convened at Amboise, and, almost at once, the chief retreat and shrine of the brotherhood came to be that weird, natural fortress on the coast of Normandy, long devoted to St. Michel, and still called Mont St. Michel. There, in the old convent-fortress perched high upon the rocky peak which rises like a lonely sentinel out of sea and sand, is still to be seen the old "Hall of Cavaliers," so long their meeting-place and point of pilgrimage. To do honour to this shrine, the collar of the order was composed of shells such as are found in great profusion on the coast in its neighbourhood. In the heraldic emblazonments, of the architectural monuments of this and a later period, the introduction of these cockle shells was most frequently intended to refer to the order, and to pay reverence to its saint. Many of them will be found at Blois, but at Amboise is seen instead, set in the heads of the Gothic windows of the river façade, the flaming sword of St. Michel.

Charles VIII. spent a lonely youth at Amboise. Some say he was neglected and disliked by his father; others that he was so delicate a lad that seclusion was necessary for his health. But, whether his early residence there was from necessity or choice, Charles VIII. always retained a fondness for Amboise and practically rebuilt it. As we have no record of additions since his time (nothing but a certain amount of destruction and an occasional attempt at repairs or restoration), Amboise, as it stands to-day, is a monument of the reign of Charles VIII., and of the later years of the fifteenth century. It is also fundamentally Gothic, though some of the decorative details of the garden façade, as they are coming out now (1902) from under the restorer's hand, are in the later Renaissance style. These and the lighter, more open Gothic work were most probably the later work of Charles, added after his return from his famous campaign in Italy. He is said to have greatly admired the fashions in architecture which he found in the south, and to have brought a long train of Italian workmen home with him.

This work of rebuilding was not even begun, however, in 1484, and it was in the old fortress that the betrothal of Charles with the little Marguerite of Austria was celebrated. Charles was thirteen and the young princess eight years of age, and, after the ceremonies and festivities, which are sometimes alluded to as her marriage, and which were considered almost as binding, Marguerite was left at Amboise under the guardianship of the Duchesse de Bourbon to be educated for her future position as queen of France. Anne of Beaujeau, Duchesse de Bourbon, was an able woman and possessed of a masculine intellect; but whether she was a sympathetic or kindly friend to the lonely child committed to her care is much to be doubted, and as Charles very soon began to turn his eyes toward the young princess of Brittany with her tempting dowry, Marguerite's life at Amboise, after a few years, was deprived of the consideration and consequence that belonged to her as queen of France. In 1492, after having been eight years at Amboise, she was sent back to her father.

Charles and his queen, Anne of Brittany, were frequently at Amboise, where they doubtless occupied much time in superintending the work of rebuilding, a work continued during his entire reign and planned with great magnificence. Commines says that king Charles began at Amboise the "sumptuosest building both in the castle and in the town that any king took in hand these hundred years, as appeareth by the towers, up which men ride on horseback, and by the foundations laid in the town, the platforms whereof were drawn of such exquisiteness that they were declared to be a work of marvellous charge, and that they could not be finished in a long time."

Only one of these towers is accessible to-day, but its enormous girth and inclined plane of brick-work, up which one might still drive a coach and pair, renders it even to-day one of the sights of the Loire. Both towers are assigned to the period between the king's return, in 1496, from his two years' campaign in Italy, and his death in 1498. Then, inspired by the splendour of the palaces of Italy, and assisted by the Italian workmen whom he had induced to return with him, Charles pushed the work at Amboise with great vigour. Commines says, "For you shall understand that the king brought with him from Naples many excellent workmen in all kinds of arts, especially gravers and painters, and sure it seemed by the foundations and enterprise of the young king that he thought not to die, but hoped of long life, for he joined together all the goodly things that were commended to him, were they in France or Italy or Flanders."

Of this same period is the tiny chapel, built for

Anne of Brittany and dedicated to St. Hubert. It is an exquisite gem of florid Gothic, whose lace-like carving would not be out of place on a jewel casket. Its construction and decoration are attributed to the Italian workmen; the "gravers" from Naples. But why they chose to execute a Gothic, rather than a classical, design, we are not told. We must remember, however, that while the taste of the time, especially in Italy, was setting strongly toward a revival of classical forms, there were, even there, many so-called Gothic monuments. Gothic workmen had crossed the Alps in the thirteenth century and had taken with them the northern style, and, while the constructive possibilities of the Gothic were never fully grasped or developed in the south, its details and most striking characteristics were everywhere seized upon and carried to the extreme of richness and elaboration. The little church of Sta. Maria della Spina at Pisa, the north portal of the cathedral at Florence, much of the finish of the cathedrals of Siena and Orvieto, and the famous tabernacle of Orcagna, all are recalled by the exquisite delicacy of finish of this chapel at Amboise.

A few months after the king's return from Italy, the court, then at Amboise, was plunged into the deepest mourning by the death of his second and only remaining son. This second dauphin is said to have been a very promising child, and some authorities hint that he was not regretted by his father, who was jealous of his superior intelligence. But Brantôme says that King Charles fell into such a state of melancholy at the loss of his heir that his physicians feared for his health, and desired the court to invent some new pastimes and gaieties for his diversion. A masquerade was accordingly arranged in which the Duc d'Orléans took part. And, we are told that he danced so gaily, and, to translate literally, "played the fool so successfully" as to give great offence to the queen. She attributed his high spirits to the fact that the death of the dauphin left him the heir to the throne, and, as the health of the king was not robust, that he already felt it within his grasp. Her displeasure was so marked that the duke found it necessary to withdraw from the court until his untimely mirth should be forgotten.

Scarcely two years later, the death of King Charles occurred at Amboise, the result of an accident. "The eighth day of April," says Commines, "in the year 1498, upon Palm Sunday even, the king departed out of the chamber of the queen, Anne, Duchess of Brittany, his wife, leading her with him to see the tennice plaiers in the trenches of the castle, whither he had never led her before; and they two entered together into the gallery, called Harquelebacs gallery, and the entry into it was broken down. Moreover the king, as he entered knocked his brow against the door, notwithstanding that he were of very small stature. Afterward he beheld a great while the tennice playing, talking familiarly with all the men. The last word he spake, being in health, was that he hoped never to commit deadly sin, nor venial if he could, in uttering which he fell backwards and lost his speech. It was about two of the clock at afternoon, and he abode in this gallery until eleven o'clock at night. Every man that listed entered into the gallery where he lay upon an old mattress of straw from the which he never rose until he gave up the ghost." "Thus departed out of this world this mighty puissant prince in this miserable place, not being able to recover one poor chamber to die in."

Of the following days at Amboise, we read from the same historian, "Every man ran to the Duke of Orleans who was to succeed him as next heir to the crown. But king Charles, his chamberlains caused him to be richly buried, and immediately after his death began solemn service over him which continued day and night. His body remained at Amboise eight days, partly in his chamber, which was richly hanged, and partly in the church. All solemnities belonging to his funerals were made more sumptuous than ever were any king of France, for his chamberlains, officers, and those that were about him never departed from his body until it was laid in the ground, so that the charges of his funerals amounted to five and forty thousand francs."

During the reign of Louis XII., Amboise was handed over to Louise of Savoy as a residence for herself and her two children, Marguerite and Francis of Angoulême, and very soon the latter was recognised as the probable heir to the throne. Of the youthful escapades of the impetuous Francis, we have many accounts in the letters and diary of his adoring mother. Gifted with a superb physique and dashing spirits, Francis, even in his youth, made a brilliant figure. One of his best known boyish exploits was the loosing of a wild boar in the garden at Amboise. The servants fled, terrified, before the huge creature which charged into the entrance of the great stairway where Francis met and killed it with a dagger.

As king, Francis made only occasional sojourns at Amboise, using it as a sort of hunting box from which excursions were made into the forest, or to Chenonceaux. It was upon one of these occasions that the youthful dauphin, Henry, and his gay companions so disturbed the night air of Amboise that they were told by the irate king to carry their noisy sport elsewhere. "Go loiter on the bridge," said he, "beat the lackeys for us who do nothing but drink and beat everybody else." [1] Nothing loth, the youthful band betook themselves to the foot of the hill where the guards, who held the bridge, challenged them, and, not recognising the dauphin in the dark, were about to run him through, when the young Lord of Castleman, impulsively interposed his own person to save his prince, receiving the wound which cost him his life.

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[1] "Allons, dict il, battre le pavé sur les ponts, et nous battre contre ces lacquais qui ne font que, ribler et battre tout le monde." —BRANTÔME.

In the outskirts of the town of Amboise is the chateau of Cloux, which was given to Lionardo da Vinci as a residence when Francis tempted him to spend his last years in France. It was there that he died, but he is said to have been buried under the little chapel of Amboise. A tablet in the floor still marks the place of his interment, but whether his bones still lie there is doubtful.

Under Henry II., Amboise was even more deserted by royalty than under Francis I., but during the short reign of Francis II. was to occur the most famous, as well as the most gruesome, chapter of its history, and one of the most shocking in all the history of France. Its sinister memories still rest, a dark shadow upon the walls of the old chateau. At Amboise, one still half expects to wake from troubled dreams to find, dangling from the bridge, or swaying in the wind from the battlements above, scores of headless bodies, the first fruits of the treacherous policy of Catherine de Medicis in her dealings with the Protestants.

The court was assembled at Blois, when news of a plot, whose purpose was the removal of the young king from under their influence, came to the ears of the queen-mother and the Guises. The plotters were mostly Protestant, and religious liberty was the chief end in view; but other reforms were also aimed at; and such men as Coligny and the Prince de Condé were among the leaders.

Enough of the plot was disclosed to the young king to make it appear to threaten his life or liberty, rather than his mother's hold upon him. The court was at once removed to Amboise, considered a stronger chateau than Blois, and a trap laid for the leading conspirators. An invitation was conveyed to them to confer with Catherine as to more lenient measures to be adopted in dealing with the Protestant party. It was accepted in good faith, and Coligny, Condé, and many others of the leading reformers were soon behind the walls of Amboise, while royal troops scoured the country in every direction, in search of their followers. The roads and forests round about were found teeming with people, of whom some were implicated in the plot, but many, with only a vague knowledge of its purposes, were struggling towards Amboise in the hope of securing redress for wrongs, or relief from oppression, when the king should be free from his mother and the hated Guises.

Hundreds were murdered at sight, but the more important of the victims were conveyed as prisoners to the chateau to await a public execution, intended to act as a warning to all so-called enemies of the king. Coligny and Condé were spared for the time, but were compelled to attend the executions, which were made a court function, and to witness, with as much composure as they might command, the murder of their friends.

The headsman's block was placed on a raised platform in the public square in front of the chateau, and surrounded by raised seats to accommodate those who desired, or who dared not refuse, to witness the horrid spectacle. The court occupied the balcony above. The gentle king and his young queen, Marie Stuart, shuddered at the sight, but, with the stern eye of the indomitable queen-mother upon them, they dared not withdraw, though Francis is said to have tried at first to mitigate the punishment of his "poor subjects." These executions went on for a month, and the butchery at last became so horrible that the bridge and walls of the chateau were fairly festooned with headless bodies. The king became ill, and the court was finally driven from Amboise by the stench of blood.

With such memories, it is not strange that the chateau, soon after the massacre, began to be used as a prison; and that it never again became a resort for the French court. The long list of famous prisoners who were sent to Amboise from time to time for nearly a hundred and fifty years, were mostly prisoners of state. Among them were the two sons of Henry IV. and Gabriel d'Estrées, Cæsar, Duc de Vendôme, and Alexandre Monsieur, who were sent to Amboise by Louis XIII. and Richelieu for complicity in the so-called Spanish plot. And, during the reign of Louis XIV., the too successful financier, Fouquet, and the fascinating but designing Lauzun who nearly accomplished his elevation to the peerage by his marriage with the King's cousin, "La Grande Mademoiselle," were confined at Amboise.

In 1761, Louis XV. gave Amboise, which he erected into a grand duchy, to the Duc de Choiseul. Under Louis XVI., it came into the possession of the Duc de Penthièvre who lost it when, like most of the other great estates in France at the Revolution, it was confiscated. During all these years, the old chateau had undoubtedly gone much to decay, and the senator, Roger Ducos, to whom, in 1806, Napoleon gave it, demolished a great part of the old buildings to save himself the trouble and expense of keeping them in repair.

At the Restoration, what was left of Amboise reverted to the Duchesse d'Orléans, who was the daughter of the Duc de Penthièvre and mother of Louis Philippe. The accession of the latter made it again crown property, and, as the event proved, again a prison; for the captive Arab chief, Abd-el-Kader, resided there as a prisoner of war for five years. This intrepid leader, the hero of Browning's famous poem, was a most marked and picturesque figure, as well as a superlative horseman. He is said to have realised the picture of Saladin drawn by Sir Walter Scott. Brave, honorable, chivalrous, he was admired by his enemies as well as adored by his followers. When he concluded a treaty with the French, he answered doubts that were expressed as to his sincerity with the grave remark, "My word is sacred, I have visited the tomb of the Prophet." After the capture of Constantine by the French, he retired to a stronghold in the Mountains of Algeria, where, seeing that his cause was hopeless, he tendered his submission to the Duc d'Aumale. The latter, when he received his surrender, agreed to the stipulation made by Abd-el-Kader that he should be conducted to some Mohammedan place of refuge. This agreement was dishonourably disregarded by the French government, and the vanquished chief, with his wives, children, servants and officers, was taken to Amboise where, it is said, some were so overcome by homesickness that they committed suicide. A residence at Amboise may not appear a very great hardship, but compared with the soft climate and brilliant luxuriance of Mediterranean countries, the region of the Loire must have seemed cold and bleak, and Gothic walls stern and forbidding.

After his restoration to liberty by Louis Napoleon, Abd-el-Kader took up his residence at Damascus, where he subsequently protected a large number of Christians from massacre. Later, he removed to Ceylon where he also won golden opinions by his upright life and beauty of character.

Amboise was again confiscated in 1848, after the abdication of Louis Philippe, and again restored to his heirs after the Franco-Prussian War and the flight of Napoleon III. in 1872. Considerable damage was done to it during the latter struggle, the foundations of the towers being loosened by an explosion which blew up the bridge.

The chateau is now the property of M. le Comte de Paris,[1] under whom extensive restorations are being carried on. Until recently, little but the walls have remained at Amboise, but within a few years, it promises to be as completely restored as Blois or Pierrefonds.

One must, of course regret the loss of the softened lines and mysterious shadows, produced by age and decay, and Amboise, restored, can never possess quite the romantic interest of Amboise, partially ruined. Yet, when the choice lies between absolute decay, and restoration, one may not hesitate, and many thanks are due for the great care and reverence for the past, which here and elsewhere in France, are being exercised in the preservation of her historic monuments.

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[1] Since above was written, bequeathed to the state. (Author 1908.)

Wing of Louis XII., Blois.

Arcade, Court Façade.

Chapter VII

BLOIS

AS a monument, the chateau of Blois is notable in that it illustrates the four distinct periods of architecture, while two of its wings, which are unusually magnificent with decorative carving and heraldic emblazonments, remain models of the best period of the French Renaissance. In its history, Blois presents some of the most thrilling pages in the lives of the Valois kings. As elsewhere, one recalls beauty and romance, intrigue and bloodshed, but the list at Blois is a long one, and culminates in that most dastardly crime, the murder of the Duc de Guise. The provocation was undoubtedly great, but the crime, as planned and accomplished by Henry III., must always remain one of the basest and most cowardly in the annals of France, and its dark tragedy still overshadows all other memories at the old chateau. With such splendour of styles, and records of passion, the interest at Blois must ever endure in spite of the newness of restored walls and garish colour.

To those who look first for symmetry of general outline, the chateau at Blois is likely to prove a disappointment, owing, of course, to its variety of styles. Its wings, which nearly surround a square court, are each of a distinct period, and are united only clumsily or not at all. The unity of design and graceful outlines of Chaumont or Azay le Rideau are therefore not found at Blois. There is lacking, also, the picturesque setting of either of the above chateaux or of Chenonceaux, for the bluff crowned by the chateau at Blois rises precipitously on three sides from deep ravines now filled with the closely built houses of the town of Blois. Yet Blois is magnificent, and to a student must be the crown and climax of a chateau tour in France.

The earliest portion of the heterogeneous pile is the great hall which remains between the two wings attributed respectively to Louis XII. and Francis I. Another remnant, possibly of the same period, is the Gothic chapel which occupies a corner of the wing of Charles d'Orléans. These, with probably some of the foundations, are said to be all that is left of the stronghold built by the counts of Blois upon the site of an earlier Roman fortress sometime before the thirteenth century. These counts of Blois were among the most powerful of the lords of France, and, during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the bitter foes of the counts of Anjou: but in the thirteenth century their power had declined and Blois was sold to the French crown.

A hundred years later, it became the possession of the Orleans branch of the House of Valois, and it is with them that its really living history seems to begin.

Of Louis d'Orléans, the founder of that house, mention has already been made in connection with Pierrefonds, but his building operations appear to have been confined to that chateau, for we fail to find that he ever did much for Blois. He is said to have paid a visit to it in 1389, shortly after his marriage when he brought his bride to the grim old fortress of the counts of Blois, but it is probable that little time was spent there by the pair, either then or later. The Duc d'Orléans was one of the most brilliant figures at the court of his feeble brother Charles VI., and dominated its intrigues for many years. Moreover his young duchess was not only beautiful but highly gifted with wit and personal charm, and both the duke and duchess would be required in frequent attendance upon the king and queen at one of the royal chateaux.

Bred in a court famous for refinement and splendour, the young Duchesse d'Orléans, Valentine of Visconti, was well fitted to introduce into the ruder court of her husband the softer graces of the south. Her dower also, was one of the richest ever brought into France, including the province of Asti and reversionary rights in the duchy of Milan. In her trousseau were three thousand pearls of price, besides the jewels upon her gala dresses. Her plate was valued at one hundred thousand marks, and her jewels, ornaments, and tapestries, at seven hundred golden florins. With such gifts and wealth, the jealousy of the queen was speedily aroused, and when the mad king proved markedly docile with her, Valentine was charged with witchcraft, a suspicion strengthened by the reputation of her country as a nation of poisoners and workers in magic.

But it was only by gentle arts that the fair Italian acquired her influence over Charles VI. She soothed and amused him. We are told that she taught him a new game played with cards, and that the playing cards she brought with her from Italy were the first ever seen in France. If Valentine had been a cold, instead of a passionate woman, she might have developed into a leader rather than a victim of the intrigues of the French court; but she soon gave her passionate devotion to her brilliant but heartless husband, and his notorious infidelities could not fail to make her unhappy. The Duc d'Orléans was possessed of brilliant abilities, which rendered him a marked contrast to his poor mad brother, and of a personal fascination which, even after his tyrannies should have made him detested, long made him popular. But when his designs upon the crown became only too evident, his assassination in the streets of Paris resulted.

The murder of the Duc d'Orléans, which occurred in 1407, plunged Valentine into the depths of despair, and filled her with a consuming passion for revenge. She was at Chateau-Thierry and it was December of one of the bitterest winters ever known in France, but she took her children and started at once for Paris. The weak king received her kindly and promised her justice for her wrong, but, with a court given over to vice and intrigue, he was powerless to accomplish anything. Fearing for her safety in Paris, Valentine set out for Blois, where she was able to fortify herself; but where, worn out with her passion of despair, she died within a year.

During her last days at Blois, Valentine vainly tried to instill in the breast of her eldest son, the young Duc d'Orléans, the bitter desire for vengeance which filled her own, but Charles d'Orléans was a dreamer and little fitted for the task she set him. Then she sent for a natural son of the duke, John, of whom she said, "He is the child cut out to avenge his father's death." And, though the vengeance she longed for was never accomplished, this boy was later to justify her estimate of his character. He became the famous "Bastard" of Orleans, the Comte de Dunois, a lieutenant-general under Charles VII., and Joan of Arc's comrade.

Valentine died at Blois in 1408, in a chamber whose black tapestry bore the device chosen by her as the final expression of her grief and despair;

"*Rien ne m'est plus; plus ne m'est rien*" ("Nought have I more; more hold I nought.") Of the children of Valentine, Charles, Duc d'Orléans, became the father of Louis XII.; John, the grandfather of Francis I.; and Margaret, the grandmother of Anne of Brittany.

The life of Charles d'Orléans is most romantic. Before the death of his mother he had been married to his cousin Isabella (daughter of Charles II.) who, though only nineteen, was already the widow of Richard II. of England to whom she had been married at the tender age of eight. Most accounts of Isabella agree in depicting a very attractive character. As Queen of England at eight years of age, she had filled her position with all the precocious dignity of a child born a princess. Richard is said to have been sincerely attached to his child-queen, and her early death, which occurred at Blois in 1409, threw Charles into a perfect frenzy of grief. From being a dreamer, the young duke became a poet, and the elegies in which he mourned the loss of his young wife, were not only a solace at the time, but began the development of a talent which was later to make him famous.

Within a year of the death of Isabella, Charles was forced, because of political intrigues, to marry again, with Bonne d'Armagnac, a daughter of one of the most ambitious lords of southern France. A little later, we find him taking up arms against the

English, and in the disastrous battle of Agincourt, he was taken prisoner and carried to England where he spent twenty-five years in London Tower. These years of confinement were occupied in writing the verses which give the name of Charles d'Orléans a high rank among the early poets of France, and which still hold a place of distinction in French literature. A curious early copy still exists in the British Museum, whose cover bears a rude picture of London Tower with an opening in the wall which discloses the apartment of Charles d'Orléans, and the poet within engaged in writing his verses.

During these twenty-five years of captivity, the chateau of Blois was deserted, though in 1429 we hear of the consecration of the banner of Joan of Arc in the church of St. Sauveur, in the town of Blois. A few months later, Charles VII. was crowned at Reims, but it was not until 1440 that Charles d'Orléans was able to procure his release and return to France, and then only that he might assist in the arrangement of a treaty between England and France. After so long a captivity he was forgotten, and after his return to France he became a figure of little importance until his third wife, Marie of Cleves, bore him a son who was soon recognised as the heir to the throne of France.

The later years of Charles d'Orléans were largely spent at Blois, but just how much he did for the old chateau, it is difficult to say. The short L of the wing known as the wing of Louis XII., is still called the work of Charles d'Orléans, and it seems quite possible that the entire block was begun, perhaps even completed, by the poet-duke, and that the longer side, that to the east, was only remodelled by Louis XII. The two portions are fundamentally alike, and even if Louis XII. built from the foundations, he followed the style adopted by his father. Of the work of Charles d'Orléans at Blois, we are told, "He was fond of art, and he transformed the battlemented fortress, then becoming useless, into a residence."

Louis XII. was born at Blois, and his youth was spent there under the guidance of his wise and able mother, who had her son taught to read before he was seven. It is probable, too, that the young duke had the inspiration of a very famous library for those days, whose nucleus was four books given by Charles VI. as a wedding gift to his brother and his Italian bride. These were two Bibles, a Missal, and the Voyages of Marco Polo. Additions were undoubtedly made to this collection by Valentine and her son Charles; for, when the latter was carried prisoner to England, he gave orders that his library should be removed from Blois to a place of greater safety. Under Francis I., these books were removed to Fontainebleau where they became the nucleus of the Bibliothèque Royale.

In 1498, a courier came riding in hot haste to

Wing of Louis XII., Blois.

Blois to announce the death of the king, Charles VIII., and the accession of the Duc d'Orléans as Louis XII. Then Blois became a royal chateau; and as the frequent and favourite residence of the king and the court, it soon came to be one of the most important in France. Additions and decorations would naturally follow, but Louis XII. was of an economical turn of mind, and he is nowhere credited with extensive building operations. The little he did, however, was well done. And, whether or not Louis XII. did more for Blois than embellish the wing built by his father, that portion of the chateau stands as an enduring monument to his name, as well as to his taste and discrimination. It is, in the judgment of many, not only the most successful work at Blois, but one of the most beautiful architectural monuments in France.

Built of red brick with stone trimmings, the warm rich colour of the wing of Louis XII. is not the least of its attractions. It is not the plum red so much admired by Ruskin in St. John's College, Cambridge, but still is a soft and pleasing tone and, as the colour varies somewhat, the bricks are laid in a diapered pattern similar to that of the creamy marble of the palace of the Doge at Venice. The roof is steeply pitched, and the gables of the dormers are finished with Gothic crocketed finials. The sky line is further broken by two towers with pointed roofs and elaborate brick chimneys decorated with panelled diaper or tracery. The decorative detail is also largely Gothic, and even though the general aspect of this wing with its wide windows and entire lack of defence shows the influence of the new Renaissance movement, and a little of the carving, notably that on some of the columns of the court arcade, is distinctly Renaissance in its style, yet the new style remains only a modifying influence, and this wing is still distinctively a monument of the late Gothic and a purely French creation.

The chief entrance to the chateau is through this wing by way of a wide arch which leads through to the inner court. Around and above it is massed some of the richest decoration to be found in the entire building. Immediately above is a wide niche which shelters an equestrian statue of Louis XII., but the present figure is a modern restoration of an earlier one, destroyed during the Revolution. The double arch of the niche is elaborately foliated and pointed in the Gothic fashion, and its walls are literally sown with fleur de lys.

This figure, which is commonly accepted as representing the lily, has long been recognized as the especial emblem of royalty in France, but probably no other figure used in heraldry has occasioned more of controversy as to its origin and symbolism. Volumes have been written about it, and much curious early history recalled. It appears to have been a favourite figure with the Romans who often introduced it into their tesselated pavements; and it is found on an early Swedish coat of arms. It is usually considered to have been derived from a floral form, the lily, or more particularly from the iris-lily, but it is also traced to lance heads, or to bees; or it may be a purely conventional shape whose three lobes were intended to represent the Trinity. As seen upon the wand of Gabriel in early Christian art, it most probably represents the lily. Gabriel was the angel of the annunciation, and the lily was the especial flower of the Virgin. Its symbolic form would therefore most naturally be used to indicate his most important office.

There are many stories of the introduction of the figure into French heraldry, a number of which recount in some form a vision vouchsafed to Clovis. These all relate the appearance of the Virgin, bearing in her hand, either her own flower, the lily, or a banner, upon which the bees or toads, earlier the device of the great chief, were transformed into the conventional figure now called the fleur de lys. The banner was of blue and there were three fleur de lys in gold. Clovis was promised glorious victories under its leadership, and immediately adopted it as the especial device of his new kingdom.

The words fleur de lys are thought by many to be a rebus, meaning the "Flower of Clovis." Clovis was the Frankish form of Louis, and up to the time of Louis VII. French kings signed themselves Loïs or Loys. As Louis VII. was given the surname of Florus, some authorities trace the rebus to him instead of to Clovis. This theory is strengthened by the fact that the coins of Louis VI. and Louis VII. were the earliest upon which the fleur de lys appeared. But Woodward and Bennet remark, "that it also appeared at the same time upon the coins of Florence, a city which was then the mint of many European sovereigns, and from whence the name *florin* is derived." Florence, it will also be remembered still bears the fleur de lys as her especial device, but the Florentine figure is more elaborated than that of France.

Another story of the introduction of the fleur de lys into French heraldry, is even more picturesque, as well as far more probable, than that of the miraculous vision, and it does not interfere in the least with the rebus theories. "Ancient heralds," writes Newton, "tell us that the Franks of old had a custom, at the proclamation of their king, to elevate him upon a shield or target, and place in his hand a reed or flag in blossom, and from thence the kings of the first and second race in France are represented with a sceptre in their hand like the flag with its flower, which flowers became the armorial figures of France."

From Louis VII., at least until the Revolution, which effaced as far as possible all such memories

Wing of Louis XII., Blois.

Chimney.

of royalty, the fleur de lys remained the especial emblem of the kings of France, or even of France herself. It is sometimes called the Bourbon lily, but more properly the lily of France, and it seldom fails to appear as the distinguishing decoration of the abodes of French royalty, or upon the tombs of the kings and queens of France.

In a recessed window to the right of the niched statue at Blois, the fleur de lys are alternated with the ermine tails already seen at Loches, and introduced here as there to do honour to Anne of Brittany. Over both the wide and narrow arches of entrance are porcupines, the especial device of the House of Orleans. We are told that the order of the Porcupine was established by the Duc d'Orléans to celebrate the birth of his eldest son, Charles, who became the poet-duke. The motto of the order was "Near and Afar," referring to the ability of the porcupine to shoot his quills against a distant enemy.

Besides these devices, here and elsewhere in this wing, there are L's and A's for Louis and Anne, with royal shields and the cords of the House of Brittany. The entire figure of an ermine also occasionally occurs, notably on one of the chimneys, where one medallion bears an ermine with a background of ermine tails, and the other a porcupine with a background of fleur de lys.

One of the first assemblages of importance at

Blois after the accession of Louis XII. was the reception of Cæsar Borgia who was right royally entertained there, when he came into France bringing to Louis the much-desired divorce which permitted him to make Anne of Brittany a second time queen of France.

Much of the really happy life of this royal pair was spent at Blois. Here Louis permitted Anne to assemble the noble ladies of the realm and establish a court of her own in conjunction with that of the king, and Anne undoubtedly ruled her attendants with dignity if not always with consideration and discretion. One rather wonders where they all housed themselves, as the chateau at that time was not large. And if, as is possible, the wing attributed to Francis I. was begun by Louis XII., it was probably intended to accommodate the growing needs of the double court. As both Louis and Anne were staid and dignified, and opposed to lavish expenditure, their life at Blois was not brilliant; yet there are occasional accounts of the ceremonious reception of visiting dignitaries which furnish amusing pictures of mediæval etiquette if not of extravagant entertainment.

Among them is the record of the visit of Philip, Archduke of Austria and his Archduchess, the latter that daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, who is more familiarly known as Crazy Jane. Whether they brought with them their young son, already recognised as the heir of both Spain and Austria, we are not told, but it is quite probable it was at this time that Louis and Anne conceived the idea of a marriage between their infant daughter, Claude, and the young Charles who later became Charles I. of Spain and V. of Germany. Such an alliance could only have resulted in disaster for France but with Anne anything was to be preferred to the other marriage proposed for her daughter, that with the heir to the French crown, Francis of Angoulême, whom she disliked only less than she detested his mother, Louise of Savoy.

At the time of the above mentioned visit, the so-called wing of Louis XII. at Blois had begun to assume something of its present shape and aspect, and one wonders whether the Spanish princess admired its purity of style and delicacy of detail, or whether she found it tame in comparison with the greater magnificence, the almost barbaric splendour of many Spanish palaces. The reception of the archduke and archduchess was conducted with much dignity. We are told that "It was late when they reached their journey's end, and torches were flashing from the river as they rode into the town, the ladies on palfreys harnessed in black and crimson velvet. The whole courtyard of the castle was filled with the king's archers, and the Swiss body-guards kept back the crowd that pressed forward to see the procession pass into the doorway of the newly built castle that had just been decorated with the porcupine of Louis XII.

"The archduke slowly made his way to the great hall, which was all hung with cloth of gold and tapestry that pictured the fall of Troy. Upon a broad velvet carpet was the King's chair, with Monseigneur d'Angoulême behind it, and the greetings were soon over with great courtesy on either side. The archduchess was some little way behind, but at last she appeared, and having obtained the sanction of the Bishop of Cordova she kissed King Louis and the young duke, and was then, with great consideration sent away to the ladies." "The crowd was still so thick in all the rooms and passages that movement, even for the great, became a thing of time and patience, and when they met the baby princess Claude, carried by Madame de Tournon's daughter, that little lady signified her disapproval of the whole ceremony with such lusty yells that etiquette had to be disregarded, and all the four-and-twenty small girls who followed the princess set themselves loyally to soothe her discontent.

"At length the company were distributed in their various rooms, the still-protesting princess to her apartment hung with tapestries of farm-yard scenes and '*tout petits personages*,' the archduke to his chamber adorned with stories of the Trojan War, and Anne de Bretagne to the room that was decorated with a kind of 'natural history pattern,' of strange birds and beasts.

"Later on refreshments were borne to the archduchess in solemn procession, led by the Maître d'hôtel with his little page-boys after him, clad in yellow silk with velvet slashes, bearing each a waxen candle in a golden candlestick. Madame de Bourbon followed, carrying a great gold box filled with all kinds of confectionery and sweetmeats, then Madame d'Angoulême with a gold box filled with napkins, and Madame de Nevers with yet another filled with knives and forks. And so the court went pompously to bed." After a few days of similar solemn ceremonies and courtly converse, the guests left Blois in as great state as they came.

Besides the grand court of ladies attending her at Blois, Queen Anne had her especial guard of a hundred gentlemen, the most of whom were Bretons. Some of these always attended the queen's promenade when she went to mass, and upon a small terrace which is still called the *"Perche aux Bretons,"* constantly awaited her appearance for any outing.

It was probably some of these "thrifty" Bretons who assisted Queen Anne in that unfortunate display of forehandedness which for a time stripped Blois of portable valuables and finally resulted in the disgrace and banishment of the Marshal de Gié. The king was ill, and, as his illness threatened to leave her again a widow, Anne, in order to secure for herself as much as possible of the spoils of royalty, loaded two boats, lying under the walls of the chateau, with the finest furniture, jewels, and plate, and sent them down the Loire on their way to her own city of Nantes. The Marshal de Gié, who considered himself responsible, had the boats seized between Saumur and Nantes, and then, to add to the queen's humiliation, the king got well. The ever obsequious Brantôme, who relates the story, considers the punishment inflicted by the irate queen upon the too faithful marshal, banishment from the court and various suits and persecutions, to have been but just.

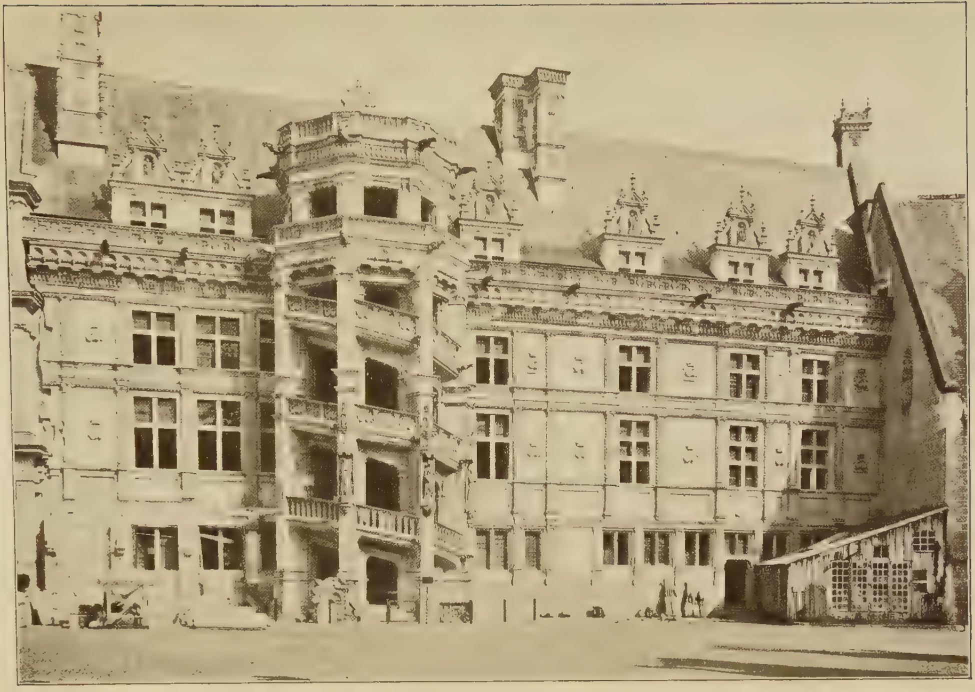
This illness of the king caused great lamentation to be made throughout the realm. Guizot tells us that "There were to be seen night and day at Blois, at Amboise, at Tours, and everywhere else, men and women going all bare throughout the churches and holy places, in order to obtain from divine mercy, grace of health and convalescence for one whom there was as great fear of losing as if he had been the father of each." It was during this illness that Louis, touched by the love of his people, finally gave up the idea, which had been most unpopular, of a Spanish marriage for his daughter, and added a clause to his will directing that she should be married, so soon as she was old enough, to the heir, Francis of Angoulême.

Anne died at Blois in January, 1513, and there, as well as at St. Denis, great honours were paid to her; for, notwithstanding her sharp tongue, and that she ever loved her Breton more than her French subjects, she was a right royal queen, and most sincerely mourned by the king and all the people of France. Brantôme tells us "that after her decease the body of the queen remained for three days in her chamber. Around it were a dozen large wax candles kept burning day and night." The face was exposed, and is said to have remained as in life. After the embalming, the remains were placed in a very rich casket and removed to the grand salon, where they rested for three days more, after which the grand procession started for Paris. There were priests and bishops, and great lords from all over France, besides the official mourners of the court, and a perfect army of attendants of all ranks, making altogether one of the most impressive and splendid processions that ever set out for St. Denis.

We fail to find record of any visit to Blois of the vivacious young beauty, Mary of England, who succeeded Queen Anne; but it is most probable that, at Blois and elsewhere, her gay pranks startled the staid court, and captivated the impressionable young heir. The younger members of the court, except perhaps the gentle Claude, were only too ready to follow her lead, but Mary's tantalising tricks only bewildered the poor old king; and when she changed his dinner hour from ten o'clock to noon, and his supper from six to nine, Louis fell ill, and this time he did not recover. Mary was speedily married to a younger husband, and the young queen, Claude, to whom her father bequeathed his love for the chateau, was left mistress of Blois.

Wing of Francis I., Blois.

Court Façade.



Chapter VIII

BLOIS (Continued)

QUEEN CLAUDE was born at Blois, and her short life was largely spent there, in the wing bearing her father's name. But Francis cared little for it; and, after he ascended the throne, he restlessly flitted from chateau to chateau carrying with him his rapidly growing court, or made a foray into Italy, ostensibly to recover fancied rights there, but really in search of novelty or adventure.

It is hardly necessary to say that the reign of Francis I. was one of tremendous activity in works of architecture. New buildings were undertaken everywhere by the showy young king, whose ambition halted at nothing, and the vicinity of Paris, as well as the valley of the Loire, was soon filled with the bustle and stir of the workmen, both Italian and French, employed by him. Of the many monuments that bear the name of Francis I., the wing at Blois is still considered his *chef d'œuvre*, and frequently also, as the *chef d'œuvre* of the French Renaissance. That it is purer in style and more delicate in detail than any other work of Francis is true, but that he was entirely responsible for its success is much to be doubted. Mrs. Mark Pattison says: "The building of the northern wing of the chateau of Blois, commenced by Louis, was already far advanced when the reign of Francis began, and to him fell the speedy honours of its completion." The influence of Queen Claude must also count for something. The daughter of the builder of the wing of Louis XII. was likely to possess exquisite and refined taste, and the completion of work begun by her father in the home of her childhood, must have called out her keenest interest. Queen Claude died at Blois at the early age of twenty-four, and after that event there is little mention of further work, and we rarely hear of the assemblage there of the unwieldy court of Francis.

The wing called the wing of Francis I. follows in a natural progression the style of the earlier wing of Louis XII. The symmetrical and ordered arrangement of the latter has simply become more marked, and the decorative detail is all of purely Renaissance designs. It is the court façade of this wing that merits especial attention, and there, though we find a steeply pitched roof with Gothic dormers and a spiral stairway, the walls are elaborately panelled with pilasters whose three orders are superimposed one above the other; there are string courses marking the stories, and the whole is crowned and held

Wing of Francis I., Blois.

Detail of Stairway.

together by a heavy and splendidly carved cornice, all of which features tend to produce that regularity of arrangement, and predominance of horizontal lines, which are the marked characteristics of classical and Renaissance architecture. It is true the ordered arrangement is here broken by the open spiral staircase, which juts out and towers boldly upwards, but that Gothic feature does not end after the Gothic fashion, in a sharply pointed roof, but, after being bound to the mass of the building by the heavy cornice, it is finished with a lighter cornice and an open balustrade.

The beauty and magnificence of this staircase have probably never been excelled. The upright lines of its support have the necessary solidity to give it weight and dignity, and the curves of the spiral, with the exquisite elaboration of decoration, add the grace and beauty which complete a picturesque and finished creation. Even the double curves of the stairs yield themselves to the motion of the waving lines, which "rush upwards like a flame blown from beneath."

The decorative carving, massed upon balustrades and walls, is here, even more than elsewhere in this magnificent wing, rich beyond compare, and delicate with the skill of a most refined period. Many of the motives employed are heraldic devices, the most prominent and frequent being that highly decorative animal, the salamander, the emblem of Francis.

This figure had been chosen by the father of Francis, as his especial device, with the motto, "I nourish the good and extinguish the evil," referring to fire, of which the salamander is a symbol. There are also many F's and C's for Francis and Claude, as well as a great profusion of L's, showing that the good king Louis, at least by his daughter, was not forgotten. Occasionally we find the device of Claude, the swan pierced by an arrow, which she had inherited from her grandmother, Marie of Cleves, whose motto, "*Candida candidis*," (I whiten the whitest), seems fitly to belong to the gentle Queen Claude.

The central shaft of the spiral bears graceful Renaissance designs carved in panels, each finished at the top with a cockle shell. The attendant points them out as the shells of St. Michel. The most famous decoration of this stairway is, of course, the three canopied statues attributed to Jean Goujon. They have the delicate yet artificial grace of that master, and are evidently of his school, if not from his hand. In either case they must be of a much later date than the other work on the stairway, as Goujon was not born until 1520. Probably they were the last additions to it, and very possibly were added under the direction of Catherine de Medicis, for whom Goujon executed much work elsewhere. Whether the statues now to be seen at Blois are the early ones or a restoration,

Wing of Francis I., Blois.

Interior Stairway.

the writer is not prepared to say, but they are everywhere alluded to as the original figures.

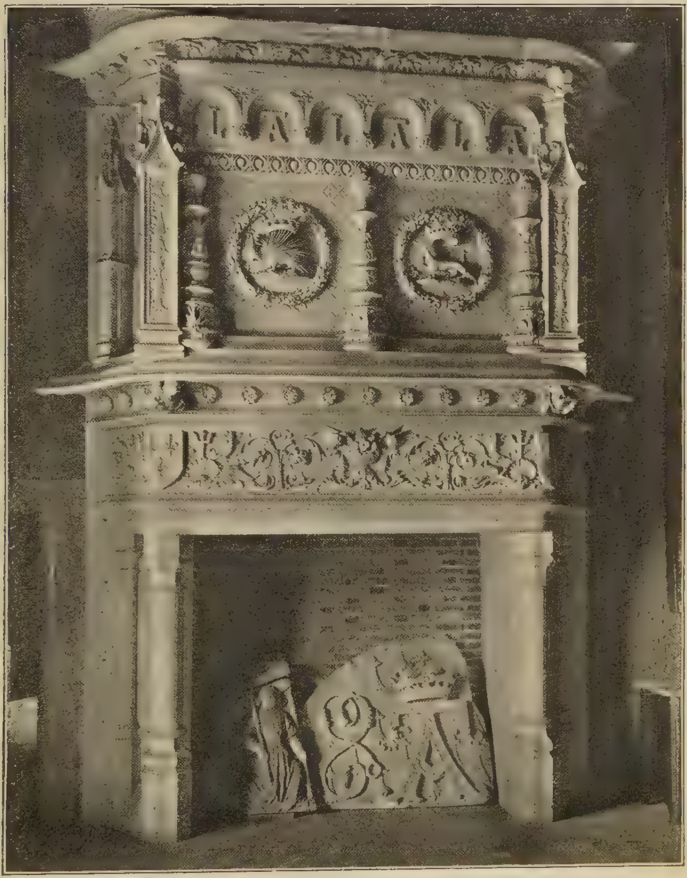
The outer façade of this wing rises high above the bluff overlooking the town. It is even more markedly open than the court façade, and its deeply recessed windows, which Henry James likens to opera boxes, open into chambers made famous by memories of the later Valois kings and queens. Their walls are now covered with canvas painted with designs supposed to reproduce those upon the old hangings. A prominent figure of these designs is the H, or the interlaced H and C, of Henry II. and Catherine de Medicis. The hangings reproduced, therefore, were of the period of Catherine, who probably redecorated these apartments. The tiny cabinet called the oratory of Catherine de Medicis is panelled in wood with exquisite Renaissance designs carved and gilded. There are two hundred and thirty panels, of which no two are alike in design, and the figures are some of the most beautiful ever produced by the Renaissance style anywhere in Europe.

The larger apartments in this wing are on the court side, and of them the "Salle des Gardes" is the most important. It is on the second floor, and reached by the spiral staircase. Its restored walls are now rather distressedly painted, and its splendid chimney is much too brilliant with gilt and blue and gold. Its design, also, while much more elaborate, is hardly as good as the one already mentioned in the wing of Louis XII. The short pillars which form its support are scarcely large enough for the heavy superstructure, and the decorative designs are a little more commonplace, yet the general effect is of great richness. Here again, in one medallion, is the ermine, this time balanced by a salamander, and above is a fine row of the shells of St. Michel.

Very early in his reign, Francis I. began to devote the most of his time and money to the building of his gigantic chateau of Chambord, and after the death of Queen Claude, very little of either was spent at Blois. The work of Francis at Blois was therefore confined to the completion of the wing that bears his name. And so the chateau remained with its old thirteenth century hall, its wings of Charles d'Orléans, Louis XII., and Francis, through the reigns of Henry II., Francis II., Charles IX., Henry III., and on down to that of Louis XIII. Then it came into the possession of the dull and prosy brother of that king, Gaston d'Orléans, who, bitten by the popular mania for a newer style, proposed to tear down all the old pile and rebuild it under the supervision of Mansar, whose barren creations were then the fashion in Paris. Happily Gaston's death occurred before he succeeded in building more than one wing, and before any destruction was necessary to make way for further work. This cold, but eminently respectable wing of Gaston

Wing of Francis I., Blois.

Chimney, Salle des Gardes.


L A L A L A

d'Orléans still bounds the west side of the court, where side by side with the brilliant early work of the French Renaissance, it stands as a barren example of what may be accomplished when all life and originality give place to a slavish following of academical rules.

Henry II. like Francis I., seems to have cared little for Blois, preferring Chenonceaux, where he installed Diane de Poitiers; or Paris, where he was beginning the new palace of the Louvre. But under the three sons of Henry, Blois was frequently the residence of the court whose dominating spirit was Catherine de Medicis. Here the *escadron volant*, Catherine's bevy of beautiful women, danced and feasted, and frequently assisted their royal mistress in blinding the eyes of the attendant courtiers as to her real designs.

Catherine especially delighted in theatricals, and a performance is recorded at Blois, especially ordered by her for the entertainment of the king, of the new tragedy called Sophronisbe, by M. Saint Gelais. During the same reign, that of Charles IX., one of the most striking figures at the court was the princess Marguerite. Her portrait, now to be seen at Blois, does not give the impression of the great beauty described by Brantôme, yet her dress was always magnificent. Even when in later life she became the faded, untidy, and much bedizened laughing-stock of the court of Henry IV., she always appeared in splendid fabrics and rich jewels. On a certain Palm Sunday at Blois, Brantôme describes her in a dress of crimped cloth of gold which came from Constantinople, and which was all decked out as though starred, with diamonds and other precious stones. Then the servile pen of Brantôme goes on to say that the great weight of this costume would have crushed any other than his much adored princess, but that her fine and well developed figure supported it admirably, and that she walked holding a palm in her hand as though "endowed with a royal majesty."

It was about this time that Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, came to Blois to arrange the marriage of her son with this same splendid princess. Glimpses of this historic visit are afforded us in the letters of the Venetian Ambassador as well as in those of Jeanne herself. The former writes, "The Queen of Navarre, whose character offers a singular mixture of masculine harshness with cautious diffidence, observes with consternation the attitude of the members of the royal family. The showy tastes of Marguerite and the hostility of Catherine are to her a veritable moral torture." And Jeanne wrote to her son, "The princess is beautiful, well educated and graceful, but has been reared in the most corrupt atmosphere in the world." "I have no free speech with the king nor with Madame (Marguerite), but only with the queen-mother, who treats me with extreme carelessness." She closed by advising Henry to marry his wife at once and remove her from so poisonous an entourage. The betrothal of Henry and Marguerite soon took place in the chapel at Blois, but before the marriage could be celebrated at Paris, Jeanne d'Albret was dead, poisoned, it was whispered, by wearing a pair of gloves prepared for her by Catherine's astrologer.

When Henry III., as the result of his own weakness and the popularity of the Duc de Guise, was obliged to fly from Paris, he took refuge, first at Chartres and later at Blois. There, to revive his waning authority, he convoked a States-General. The sittings of that body were held in the old thirteenth century hall, to-day so unpleasantly brilliant with fresh paint, but for that occasion richly hung with velvets and tapestries. A large stage with three steps was placed between the third and fourth pillars. On it was a dais with three chairs of state covered with violet velvet, with fleur de lys and fringes of gold. The centre chair was for the king, and those on either side for the queen and the queen-mother. On the right of the king were the Bourbon princes, and at the back and around the stage stood the king's body guard and the two hundred gentlemen of his household with battle-axes. Galleries were arranged for ambassadors and ladies of the court. The walls were hung with tapestry bordered with rich fringes, and the pillars were hung with green velvet embroidered with fleur de lys. In front of the king, but on the lowest step, sat the Duc de Guise as Grand Master of the king's household.

Upon this occasion Henry really rose to the dignity of his kingship. His speech was able and eloquent. He referred to the inordinate ambition of the Guises, and called upon the assembly to convict the Catholic League of high treason. But the king's assumption of strength and ability vanished with his speech; and during the following days at Blois, the surface routine of courtly etiquette became a thin crust, covering what was literally a seething volcano of evil passions, which continually broke out and threatened a grand eruption. Guise undoubtedly hoped to overthrow the king, and the king watched him as a tiger its prey.

An altercation between the pages, guards, and servants of the opposing factions, which finally became a pitched battle in the court of the chateau, and which resulted in many wounded and several dead, was very possibly pre-concerted by Guise and his followers, in the hope of drawing the king into the mêlée when he could be accidentally disposed of. But Henry was wary and kept to his apartment.

A few days later the duke followed the king to vespers in the chapel of the chateau, but, instead of joining in the service, he occupied the time in reading very attentively a pamphlet that he had with him. Upon going out, the king said to him, "You have been very devout." Whereupon the duke explained that he had been reading a Huguenot satire aimed against the king, and, that the king might know who were his true friends, he wished he would read it for himself. Henry made little response, and the duke followed him into the garden, where, with his back to the wall he stood at bay. He said he well knew he had not the happiness to stand in the good graces of the king, and he therefore prayed him to accept his resignation of his offices, and permit him to retire to his own estates. The granting of such a request would have been equivalent to a declaration of civil war, which Henry feared to precipitate. He therefore received it with hauteur, and prayed the duke not to think of retirement. But when the king reached his own chamber, his assumption of dignity gave way to a fit of impotent fury. He threw his hat against the wall and otherwise displayed his anger at his powerlessness to hold his rival within bounds. Within fifteen minutes the duke was informed of the king's passion, and that very evening a council of his leading followers was held to decide as to future action.

There were the Cardinal de Lorraine, the Archbishop of Lyons, the old president of Neuilly, Marteau, and the cold and crafty Menneville. M. de

Lyons presented a brave front. The king, he said, knew well the great popularity of the Duc de Guise, and would not dare to take strong measures against him. M. Neuilly, who was more easily shaken, was fearful. He even wept. "If you are lost, Monsieur, we are all lost." Marteau interrupted roughly, "We are the stronger, we have nothing to fear." Menneville swore at all of them. "M. Lyons," he said, "understands nothing. He talks of a king who is wise himself, or wisely counselled, but Henry is a fool. He has neither wisdom nor foresight. He may do anything, and at least will do nothing good. It is necessary for us to bestir ourselves, and act before he does." "Menneville is right," said Guise, "and wiser than all the others. Nevertheless," he continued, "at this point in our affairs, though I should see death coming in by the window I would not fly by the door." Thus he replied to their thoughts rather than their speech, for Menneville and Marteau had not proposed to fly, but to act.

But Guise was not prepared to act. That was a *dernier ressort* which he had great hope would not be necessary. Something might happen, besides he was tired of himself, his rôle and his friends. Montaigne says of the two great leaders of this period, that Guise was scarcely a Catholic and the king of Navarre scarcely a Protestant. "Guise had been condemned in his infancy to the rôle of chief of the

Catholic party, but he really inclined more to the religion of the *reiters* of the Rhine; to the confession of Augsburg." As to his friends, De Thou tells of meeting the *entremetteur,* Schomberg, at about this time when the latter was hastily leaving Blois, where he had had an audience with the duke. In reply to the question as to why his stay was so short, the young magistrate, after expressing great respect for the duke in person, frankly avowed that he did not remain with him because he always found him surrounded by rascals and bankrupts. He had said the same to Guise, who had replied with a shrug, "What will you? I have always failed in my advances with honest men, I must have friends, and I take those who come to me."

Guise represented a faction which was undoubtedly stronger than that of the king, and, as a leader, had already shown brilliant abilities, but when it came to the precipitation of civil war, perhaps the murder of the king, he hesitated. Each day there came to him warnings of the king's intention to have him assassinated or in some way disposed of, but each day he said to his followers, "Not yet." He was urged to fly, but it would not have been easy, and Guise paid no heed to the warnings. The queen-mother lay ill in her apartments at Blois, and it is possible that some of the warnings came from her, for it is said she shrank from this last cold-blooded horror, which was nevertheless only the natural, almost unavoidable, result of her own long career of intrigue and crime. The king did not really want to kill Guise, even though there seemed to be no other relief from an impossible situation, consequently, when it came to extreme measures, Henry, as well as Guise, hesitated. But both were urged on by the seething passions of a corrupt court whose atmosphere had been created by Catherine de Medicis, and by a country made frantic by long years of oppression and misrule. The death of one or the other, as well as the civil war which was to follow, and which Catherine foresaw, was inevitable.

Accounts of the murder of the duke do not agree in all particulars, but the main facts as related by Michelet are substantially as follows. The plot was carefully laid by the king, and executed by a number of the forty-five Gascons who were his own especial body guard. The duke was summoned to an early audience at four o'clock in the morning. A last warning had been handed to him at supper the night before, but the note had been crumpled and thrown under the table with the words "He dare not." So in the chill dusk of a winter morning, for it was December, Guise, dressed in a new and gallant costume of grey satin, crossed the court and mounted the spiral stair to the Salle des Gardes. There seemed to be an unusual number of guards about which surprised him a little, but when one presented a request for favours, he answered politely. His secretary attempted to send him a handkerchief with a note folded in it, "Save yourself or you are a dead man," but neither the handkerchief nor the note reached him.

Upon reaching the Salle des Gardes, Guise entered and seated himself until he should be summoned to the cabinet of the king. An indefinable look on the faces of the guards present struck him with a sudden fear. He saw himself absolutely alone and at the mercy of a sudden quarrel. "I am cold," said he with a shiver, and gave directions to have the fire mended. Then "My heart troubles me, M. de Morfontain, ask the valet de chambre to bring me from the king's presses some of those raisins of Damascus preserved in rose leaves." These were not found, but some prunes of Brignole were brought instead. The duke, years before, had received a wound on one side of his face which had made him the second of his house who received the name *Le Balafré*. Now, as the eye above the wound began to moisten, he made it a pretext to ask another attendant to find one of his pages at the door and send him for a handkerchief, but it soon transpired that no one could pass out or in, and the king's valet brought him one instead. Word was then brought from the king, who had been assured that his victim was safely in his hands, asking his attendance in his cabinet. Guise put some of the prunes in his comfit box, and threw the remainder on the floor. Then he rose, and carrying the box and his gloves in one hand, and with his mantle thrown over his arm, passed through the narrow passage that led to the king's antechamber. There he found eight guards, whom he saluted as he passed on to the cabinet. Within a few steps of the door he put his hand to his throat and turned a little, feeling that he was followed. In a moment his arms were pinioned and blow after blow of well aimed daggers wrung from him the cries, *"Eh! mes amis Eh! mes amis"* and the final *"Miseracorde"* as he fell at the door of the king's chamber. His last cry is said to have been heard by his brother the Cardinal de Lorraine, who at the same moment was being entrapped in a dungeon at the end of the same wing of the chateau.

When the king had been assured that his victim was really dead, he raised the portière and entered from his cabinet. The body he ordered searched in his presence, but besides a few trinkets, nothing was found save a scrap of writing in the duke's hand, evidently a memorandum, "To carry on a war in France would require seven thousand livres a month." While the search was being made, a slight movement of the body was perceptible. It was the quiver of the final struggle as the spirit rendered itself up. The king was much impressed. *"Ah! qu'il est grand! Encore plus grand mort que vivant!"* It was an involuntary prophecy. A rude cross of straw was thrown across the body, which was left for two hours lying where it fell.

Henry went at once to receive his mother's congratulations. He found her in bed, and after inquiring as to her health, replied to hers as to his welfare with *"Moi! très bien, je suis roi de France, j'ai tué le roi de Paris."* Catherine received his horrid announcement with a *"terrible grimace,"* but contented herself by saying "I pray God that good may come of it."

The body of the Duc de Guise was burned in one of the lower rooms of the chateau, and the ashes thrown into the river. Other leaders were also entrapped and a few were executed. A few days later the queen-mother herself died at Blois. Brantôme, notwithstanding he was her admirer, says bluntly that Catherine died of chagrin or baffled spite (*creva de dépit*). The machinery she had set in motion had gained a momentum she was powerless to control. She had not desired the death of the Duc de Guise. Such extreme measures as the cold-blooded assassination of a powerful leader, were utterly contrary to her policy of intrigue and dissimulation. Also she undoubtedly foresaw the years of devastating civil war that must follow such a step, as well as the possibility of that which happened less than a year later, the assassination of Henry at the instigation of the Guises.

Henry remained in close attendance upon his mother during her last few days. Michelet says, "possibly from affection or habit, but perhaps from curiosity to see if she would not continue to intrigue, even in her dying moments, and even yet accomplish some subtle stroke that would turn the tide in his favour." He wept a little at the end, but not for long. He had other affairs. Her servants wept also, but we are told it was because of the debts owed to them by their dead mistress which would probably not be paid by her heirs.

Catherine was given a temporary burial in the church of St. Sauveur at Blois. It is said that, as there was lacking at Blois the proper means of embalming, the body of the dead queen soon became so obnoxious that it had to be removed from the church and buried in the ground, and it was over twenty years before it was removed to its final resting place at St. Denis. Henry III., in the short year of life remaining to him, had scarcely time to think of it, and Henry IV., even during his reign of twenty years, had still less. When the body was finally removed, says Michelet, "the heart, if there was one, or if they found it, was placed in an urn, and sent to the Celestins." This urn was decorated by Germain Pilon, and is now to be seen in the Louvre.

The murder of the Duc de Guise seems to have poisoned the air of Blois for royal lungs, for it was rarely used as a royal residence after that event, and nothing further of importance ever happened there. Louis XIII. imprisoned his mother, Marie de Medicis at Blois, when her intrigues had become more than usually unbearable, and she escaped by clambering down from one of the high windows on the town side of the wing of Francis I., surely quite a feat for the stout lady made famous by the skill of Rubens! The prosaic Gaston d'Orléans, with his daughter, "La Grande Mademoiselle," spent some pompous years at Blois, and during those years he accomplished the building of his wing, and meditated the destruction of work he was too stupid to appreciate. A splendid and pompous visit is also recorded of Louis XIV., but it did not last long, and, in the newer splendours of the chateaux nearer Paris, Blois was forgotten.

After the destructions of the Revolution, which were especially ruinous at Blois, what was left of the chateau was converted into a barracks, but in 1845 it was placed in the restorer's hand. Much of his work is admirable and undoubtedly saved an utter ruin. The expense, of course, was enormous, and if we regret the frequently distressing scheme of colour decoration, we must be thankful for so good a restoration of old walls and much magnificent carving.

One stretch of the old wall has been spared, together with a somewhat dilapidated tower. The latter, owing to its reputation as the scene of the nightly meetings between the scheming Catherine and her astrologer, still exerts a mysterious and gruesome fascination. Here, no doubt, they spent long hours together consulting the stars as to coming events, and probably arranging such as did not please them according to their own liking.

Chapter IX

CHENONCEAUX

CHENONCEAUX has long enjoyed a degree of romantic interest accorded no other of the many royal chateaux of Touraine. The novelty of its situation and the real beauty of its lines and construction have, no doubt, contributed largely to this reputation, but its history, which, as Henry James says, is of the personal and sentimental kind, has added much to it. To Chenonceaux the court resorted for fêtes and masques, theatricals and the writing of love verses. Intrigues of a more serious kind were by no means left outside its gates, but they have left no dark shadows and bloody memories as at Amboise and Blois. Here the atmosphere, even when dominated by the terrible Catherine, was of those luxurious pastimes in whose arrangement she was quite as much of an adept as in the gruesome tragedies with which her name is more frequently associated. Fêtes and frivolities, fantastic wit, and courtly pleasure, flourished at Chenonceaux, and seem to have left an ineffaceable brightness upon its walls and in its sunny gardens.

Until recently Chenonceaux has preserved the crowning charm of rich and historic furnishing, much of which dated from the most splendid period of the French Renaissance, and which rendered beautiful, as well as historic, interiors made famous through their occupation by kings and queens and royal favourites. These, alas! are now dispersed, and to those who have fed their anticipations upon accounts written a dozen years ago, Chenonceaux is now shorn of much of its interest and half its beauty. Very little of the interior, also, is now shown, so that to many Chenonceaux is to-day somewhat of a disappointment. Yet the chateau itself is an architectural gem, and a few hours spent in its gardens, and in studying its graceful lines and harmonious proportions well repay the fatigue of an hour's journey from Tours, or even a night or two spent in the tiny but exquisitely clean little inn, Le Bon Laboureur.

The chateau of Chenonceaux bears about the same date as the wing of Francis I. at Blois. In 1515, Thomas Bohier, having completed his purchase of the domain from a family named Marques, began the erection of the present chateau upon the foundations of an old mill, earlier built by the Marques, in the river Cher. This family of Marques had long been in possession of Chenonceaux. During the Hundred Years' War they had sided with the English, for which treasonable behaviour their chateau, a rough kind of feudal fortress, had been partially razed to the ground by no less a warrior than the redoubtable hero of Brittany, Bertrand du Guesclin. This siege and destruction appears to be the only martial note struck in the entire history of Chenonceaux. Some years later the Marques were able to secure royal pardon which permitted the rebuilding of their outworks as well as a new donjon tower; but they gradually became involved in debt, and were compelled to sell portion after portion of their estate until, in the early years of the sixteenth century, it passed entirely out of their hands and into those of Thomas Bohier.

This Thomas Bohier, who spent fifteen or twenty years in buying up the domain piecemeal, of the bankrupt Marques, and who finally in 1515, became the owner of Chenonceaux, was one of a family of financiers, several of whom had been employed by the crown, and who, as was usual, frequently paid for that honour either by the loss of their heads, or by financial ruin. Thomas Bohier himself suffered neither of those penalties of success, though his acquisition of so fair a domain gave him endless trouble in buying up certain so-called royal privileges. He was able to build his chateau, and perhaps to enjoy it for a few years; but after his death, his estate was found to be debtor to the royal treasury for so large an amount that Chenonceaux was finally swallowed up in its liquidation. As Francis I. had long desired the domain, the justice of the claims is a matter of grave doubt, but in 1531, Chenonceaux passed into his hands, being declared the property of the crown.

Chenonceaux had remained in the possession of the Bohiers only sixteen years, but during that period the main body of the present chateau had been built. As Catherine Briconnet, the wife of Thomas Bohier, is frequently mentioned in connection with this work of building, it seems probable that, while her husband furnished the enormous sums of money necessary, the credit for much of the taste and judgment which produced so fair a creation is due to her. We find here also the name of the architect employed, Pierre le Nepveu, called also Trinqueau, he who later built Chambord for Francis I. But the huge barrenness of the latter creation entirely lacks the exquisite charm of this dainty villa on the Cher.

To make way for her new residence Catherine Briconnet demolished all the old Gothic fortress of the Marques, except the round tower which still stands before the main entrance. Then she proceeded to raise her walls upon the foundations of the old mill from the very river itself. These foundations were necessarily angular and plain, but the upper walls broke out at once, after the old Gothic fashion, into round towers, covering the angles with their curves, and ending in the usual sharply pointed extinguishers. The roof was further broken by tall chimneys, dormers, and turrets, into that irregular and picturesque sky line which French builders were so loth to give up. The walls and roof of Chenonceaux are therefore fundamentally Gothic, but they were not built for defence. The river, of course, furnished a degree of protection, and a narrow drawbridge still guards the main portal, but by 1515, towers and drawbridges, as well as stout walls, had been rendered practically useless by gunpowder, and were preserved or produced because of custom or for their picturesque beauty. At Chenonceaux, also, the wide windows and delicate embroidery of Renaissance carving proclaim the light and open country villa rather than the mediæval fortress. The style of the decoration undoubtedly indicates the Italian influence, yet the entire creation remains distinctively French, and as a monument of the Renaissance in France, Chenonceaux still stands as an original and exquisite example of its best period.

Francis I., notwithstanding his desire to possess it, never made Chenonceaux a royal residence of any importance, and it was not until the reign of Henry II. that the chateau became famous. Before that time, it was little more than a favourite resort of the royal hunting parties from Amboise, to which often came a gay cavalcade led by Francis, with

Queen Eleanor, the morose and difficult dauphin Henry, the inscrutable Catherine, already compelled to yield a first place to her rival the ever-youthful Diana, and a long train of gay courtiers.

Both Catherine and Diana undoubtedly coveted Chenonceaux even in those early days, and Henry II. was no sooner king than it was presented outright to the favourite, much to the scandal of the court and country. The pretext for the gift was the very valuable services, long overlooked, but now conveniently remembered, which had been rendered the state by the deceased husband of Diana. Owing to certain regulations as to the inalienability of crown property, the royal favourite found it difficult to get a clear title to her new property, so to insure herself permanent possession, she went to an infinite trouble in hunting up old Bohier claims; resurrecting that bankrupt estate, as well as its heir, from a grateful oblivion, and carrying his affairs through the courts once more. In the end she practically bought Chenonceaux over again, but all to no purpose, for no sooner was Henry II. dead than Queen Catherine turned her out of the domain she had taken so much pains to acquire. We are told that Diana received Chaumont in exchange, but not just how the transaction was managed. There seems to have been no redress possible, and Diana, mourning the loss, not only of her royal lover, but of her romantic villa as well, retired, not to Chaumont, for which she seems to have cared little, but to her splendid chateau of Anet, a later creation than Chenonceaux, and, before its destruction during the Revolution, considered to be the *chef d'œuvre* of Philibert de l'Orme and one of the most beautiful monuments of the later Renaissance style in France.

At Anet, Diana had employed, not only De l'Orme but the leading sculptors of the early French Renaissance, Jean Goujon and Jean Cousin, and Goujon's masterpiece, La Diane Chasseresse of the Louvre, was the chief ornament of its great court. How the statue with its exquisite pedestal escaped the destruction that, at the Revolution, overtook the chateau, is something of a marvel, as well as how the beautiful portal of De l'Orme chanced to be preserved, but both are now to be seen in Paris. The first, as has already been said, is in the Louvre, the second may be seen in the court of the École des Beaux Arts, where it now forms the entrance to what was the old abbey chapel, and where it also serves as a model of the distinctively classical work of the early French Renaissance.

At the date of the building of Anet, 1550, the Italian influence had not only become strong in French architecture, but Italian architects were frequently preferred. De l'Orme was French, but he had studied in Italy and had made a name there, consequently, while he inherited French tastes, his work was entirely founded upon classical models and no Gothic features were left. According to all accounts, his work at Anet was marked by great purity and simplicity of style. The portal preserved at Paris is divided into three stories, whose chief features are the coupled columns which flank the openings. These are of the three classical orders; and are not only harmonious in proportion but pure in outline and finish. Prominent in the decorative detail is the H and the interlaced H and D, always introduced by the elderly Diana, in honour of her royal lover.

De l'Orme, it is said, also began additions at Chenonceaux for Diana, but whether the long gallery thrown across the river was completed for her or for Catherine is much disputed. That the foundations were laid for Diana, and that the work is De l'Orme's seems to be certain, and the style, as will readily be seen, is later than that of the main body of the chateau. The window caps are pedimental and all the emphasis is placed upon horizontal lines. To Diana, is attributed the elaborate arrangement of the gardens at Chenonceaux in the stiff Italian style. They are said to have been designed for her by B. Palissy, and his arrangement is still to a great extent preserved. The Gothic chapel is attributed to Catherine, and is an addition to the main body of the chateau, which otherwise remains as erected by Catherine Briconnet and her architect Pierre le Nepveu.

During the ownership of Diane de Poitiers, Chenonceaux was frequently the residence of the court, when not only the king, but the queen and the *escadron volant* honoured the favourite by their presence. It remained for Catherine, however, to arrange the famous fêtes whose descriptions have come down to us. One of these followed close upon the horrors of the massacre at Amboise, when it was found necessary to create some diversion to enliven the gloomy king and terror-smitten court. Catherine therefore gave a brilliant fête at Chenonceaux. For it the gardens were in gala dress. There were classical columns and statuary cleverly placed as in Italy. Women in rustic costumes flitted hither and thither, and inscriptions were everywhere, some were even showered from trees and balconies. Much was also made of the then new diversion of fireworks, of which a contemporary writer says, "The best device of all was on the very terrace, where fire was set to two little columns. These scattered brilliant sparks and flames of every colour and at last exploded in a million loud petards, so that everybody was delighted to have seen that day a thing which none before had ever seen the like." Here the bright, gay, and pleasure-loving Marie Stuart enjoyed her brief day of pleasure to the full, and after such scenes one cannot wonder at her unhappiness in the bleak atmosphere of her native Scotland.

At a fête given at Chenonceaux by Catherine for her son Charles IX., her daughter Marguerite is said to have so far outwitted her clever mother as to have given a forbidden interview to the Duc de Guise, who aspired to her hand. At this time the duke wished to carry her off by force, but the princess was a true daughter of the Medicis and, while avowing her love, when it came to taking an irrevocable step she temporized. While she hesitated the duke was obliged suddenly to fly to escape detection.

Yet another of Catherine's fêtes at Chenonceaux was given during the reign of Henry III., to celebrate an inconsequent victory over the Huguenots under Henry of Navarre. And Marguerite, who had already been married to that intrepid leader, not only took part in the celebration of his defeat, but was one of the three queens whose beauty and magnificence gave the fête unusual brilliancy. The others were the terrible Catherine, and Louise de Lorraine, the fair and gentle queen of Henry III. The *escadron volant* were also present in fantastic dress, and the beautiful park was brilliantly illuminated, and decorated with choice marbles recently imported from Italy. The banquet with which the fête began, was followed by a grand ball in the long gallery, and concluded by a farce played by some Italian comedians. Of the king at this fête, L'Estoile says, "He appeared dressed as a woman, with Master Love (one of his little dogs) under his arm, no doubt barking at Chicot (his jester)." His *mignons* were around him in such enormous ruffs that "their heads looked like the head of John the Baptist in a dish."

An episode at the close of this fête recalls the name of the celebrated Madame Chateauneuf. Herself one of the most famous beauties of the flying squadron, she had recently married for love a Florentine protégé of Catherine's, but, when she discovered him intriguing with another of the queen's suite, she unhesitatingly stabbed him and laid him dead at her feet.

After the deaths of Catherine and Henry III. Chenonceaux became the property of the widowed queen, Louise de Lorraine, during whose residence of eleven years we hear of no more fêtes and merry-makings. Louise de Lorraine was gentle and devout, and, after the assassination of her husband, devoted her life to good works and prayers for the repose of his soul. Chenonceaux was therefore treated to a period of dulness, only enlivened by an occasional visit of Marguerite de Valois, or Henry IV. with his much beloved Gabrielle d' Estrées. The latter was very fond of Chenonceaux, and it was doubtless to please her that Henry arranged an exchange, which gave Louise his estate of Moulins in return for Chenonceaux. The latter he then bestowed upon Gabrielle's little son, Cæsar Monsieur, whom he also created Duc de Vendôme. Cæsar Monsieur, aged four, had just been betrothed to a young princess of Lorraine, aged six, a niece of Queen Louise, and it was to her that the domain of Chenonceaux was ostensibly given. A marriage with an illegitimate son of the king was not relished by the proud family of Lorraine, but Henry was able to force the engagement and subsequent marriage, and the estate of Chenonceaux remained in the hands of the family of Vendôme until 1733.

During this hundred and thirty years of the ownership of the dukes of Vendôme, there are accounts of visits paid to Chenonceaux by the dull and prosy Gaston d'Orléans, "La Grande Mademoiselle," Mazarin, Anne of Austria, and even Louis XIV., with whom, however, the list of royal visitors closes; and, in 1733, the place finally passed out of royal hands. The new owners were a family named Dupin, people of refined taste and high standing in the literary world of their period. Madame Dupin, at one time employed as her secretary no less a person than Jean Jacques Rousseau, and we are told that the "gentle savage," then at the beginning of his career, had the temerity to fall in love with her, for which he was gently reproved. Later it is said his "Le Divin du Village," received its first presentation in the little theatre at the end of Diana's gallery.

The distinguished company which frequently assembled at Chenonceaux during the ownership of the Dupins included many famous names: Diderot, Buffon, Voltaire, the exiled Bolingbroke, and many others. And before the chateau passed out of their hands, yet another literary visit is recorded, that of Georges Sand, a great-granddaughter of Claude Dupin, the latter the first of the name at Chenonceaux.

In 1863, the property passed into the hands of M. Pelouze and his Scotch wife, Madam Wilson, whose florid portrait by a famous modern artist was recently to be seen in the long gallery. Again, a few years ago, the estate was sold to a South American family named Terry, who have largely refurnished and redecorated the chateau. Under their ownership the visitor, who is admitted only on two days in the week, is permitted to enter the dining room and chapel, to walk through the main hall, peer into the so-called salon of Francis I. and climb a back stairway to the long gallery. As M. Terry and his family occupy Chenonceaux as a residence, it is perhaps not possible to accord here the larger liberty, found in most cases elsewhere, in the historic chateaux of France. Then too, the loss of its historic furnishing has deprived the interior of Chenonceaux of the chief source of its attraction. Its walls are mostly now painfully new, and a longer, fuller visit would undoubtedly prove disappointing.

To whom we are indebted for the monstrous and abominable decorations which now disfigure the famous long gallery, we are not told, whether to the Dupins or the Wilsons, but perhaps nothing worse was ever perpetrated in France. There are a few historic or otherwise interesting pictures let into its stucco panels, but at best, it is to-day a barren place, and attractive only for its associations or for the charming views from its many windows.

Chapter X

AZAY LE RIDEAU

THE chateau of Azay le Rideau was begun in 1520, five years later than Chenonceaux, and a few years before the completion of the wing of Francis I. at Blois. Gilles Berthelot, its builder, was another of those unfortunate financiers, whose accumulation of a private fortune was speedily followed by his ruin. Berthelot's misfortunes were soon followed by his death, which occurred at Cambrai in 1529; but he had already completed his chateau, which stands to-day very nearly as he left it; a rare and pure example of the early French Renaissance, unspoiled by the rapidly developing Italian influence, and untouched by incongruous restoration.

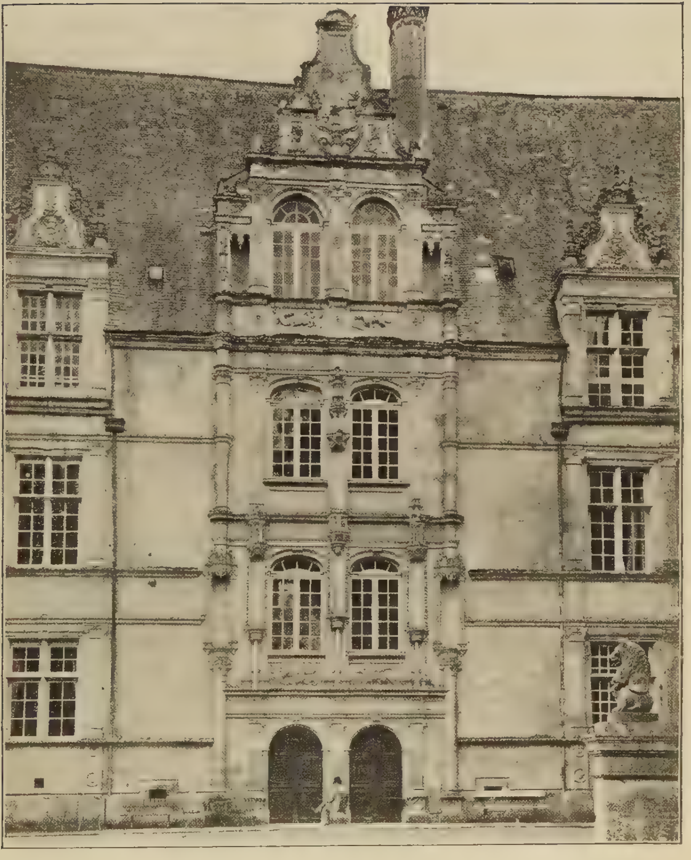
Azay le Rideau presents no single feature so rich as the stairway of Francis at Blois, nor can it vie with the romantic situation of Chenonceaux; but as a finished creation of a single period, in elegance of general outline, harmony of arrangement, and extreme beauty of detail, Azay ranks second to no one of the many graceful chateaux of Touraine.

The ground plan is in the form of an L, whose longer arm lies along the bank of a sluggish and sedgy river. Each angle is covered by a tower, and each tower is crowned by the usual sharply pointed cone-shaped roof. These, with the projecting upper story of the outside of the L, which is practically a battlement roofed over, proclaim once more the fortress origin of many features of domestic architecture in France. At Azay we even find the loopholes still left between the embrasures of the battlements, but the larger openings, the embrasures, are filled with windows.

The chateau of Azay le Rideau is, therefore, still fundamentally Gothic; but the wide carved windows, the use of pilasters, the horizontal bands which mark the divisions between stories, and the exquisite embroidery of carved ornament, which is everywhere conventional and nowhere natural or grotesque, all evidence the beginning of the Renaissance movement. The richest ornamentation is reserved for the dormers and for the inside of the L, which, being in a measure protected, serves as a court. There also is the chief portal, a pair of low arched doors opening into a stairway. The latter winds its way upward in half flights, whose landings between stories are marked in the wall above the portal by coupled windows. These are enclosed by pilasters and surrounded by delicate carving of exquisite design, whose perfection of

Chateau, Azay le Rideau.

Detail.



style and finish renders them marked examples of a great period. There are three pairs of these coupled windows, of which the upper ones project from the roof, and with the other two and the low arches of the portals, form four stories in the stairway section to three in the rest of the court façade. The definite marking of the stairway in exterior arrangements produces in this inner wall a most pleasing architectural design. It breaks a possible monotony of lines, and its richness of detail gives effect to the otherwise unimportant portal.

The salamander and the ermine appear twice in the embellishment of these doors and windows, as well as the initials of the founder, Gilles Berthelot. Heraldic emblems are also to be seen in the medallions which decorate the panelled ceiling of the worn stairway, many of them carved to do honour to Francis and Claude, or to other royal personages by whom the owners of Azay were especially favoured. There are accounts of royal visits paid by Francis I. and Louis XIV., and in the *Chambre des Rois* is pointed out the royal bed, but the history of Azay presents no record of any events of great importance.

For a number of years and until very recently, Azay le Rideau has been owned and lived in by M. le Marquis de Biencourt, and it still retains the tasteful furnishing, much of it historic, which has long made it famous. A few years ago the chateau was turned into a school for English boys, whose occupation has left very evident traces, but as their wear and tear was largely confined to the modern rugs and upholstery, the really fine old furnishings still remain for us to enjoy, as well as one of the most remarkable collections of historical portraits in France.

Of the latter, only a complete catalogue will give any adequate idea of its size and value. As a historical collection, this at Azay is not so complete or curious as that at Beauregard, but in artistic and intrinsic value it far exceeds the other, many portraits being rare and valuable examples of early masters. Here one may see several fine examples of that rarest of early painters F. Clouet. Among them is the exquisitely rendered portrait of Catherine de Medicis, and the splendid equestrian one of Henry II. The latter is described by Mrs. Mark Pattison as follows: "The king is represented about half life size on horseback. He wears a rich Court costume of black relieved by white and the trappings of his horse show the same colours.[1] . . . The sombre figure of the mounted king, swarthy, difficult of speech, gazing outwards with concentrated attention, habited in black, and set in a framework of grey half tones, haunts the recollection with the vividness of actual vision; for the subject, which seems to offer in itself weird suggestions of a phantom magic, is realized with a tangible definiteness of conception, and rendered with unflinching fidelity to the solid aspect of real life." In the trappings of the horse the chief figure in the open-work design, is the interlaced H and D.

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[1] The colours of Diane de Poitiers.

Other examples of F. Clouet at Azay are Claude, the wife of Francis I., and Henry VIII. of England. Of the school of Clouet there are many more, Charles IX., Henry III., "La Reine Margot," Marguerite of Navarre, Odet de Coligny and perhaps a few others. Other portraits are those of Francis I., Ambroise Paré, the famous surgeon of Catherine de Medicis, Joan of Arc, Philip of Burgundy, Anne de Montmorency, Anne of Austria, Francis I., and Marie Stuart, Marie de Medicis, perhaps by Rubens, Madame de Pompadour, Madame de Maintenon, Louis XV., and Marie Leckzinska, Cardinal Fleury, Henrietta of England, and Turenne by Champagne.

The setting of Azay, while not so determinately picturesque as that of Chenonceaux, is as full of quiet charm as the graceful chateau itself. Rising on a tiny island in the sluggish little river, whose banks are fringed with sedgy grasses, and bordered by fine old trees, it is shut in to the peace and quiet which are scarcely stirred by the slow current of the shallow stream. Lying so low, its windows command no distant prospect, and only one long vista may be had across the flat fields. But one does not come to Azay to look out; there is quite enough within to charm the senses and satisfy the eye, and one need ask for no more delightful experience than an hour spent under its trees in the still beauty of a late summer afternoon. The graceful chateau is eminently satisfying from all points, but as seen from near the aviary its lines are surely more beautiful than those of any other chateau in France, and the charming picture is perfected by the not too well kept garden, the picturesque bridge, and the mossy old lion of stone which guards its approach. All are beautiful, and what is more, in rare harmony, each with the other and with their surroundings. The chief note struck in the picture made by the chateau, as well as in its history, is peace. The rude turmoil of mediæval war seems never to have penetrated beyond the gates of Azay, and the strenuous hurry of our modern life is still kept without its walls. Within, we may only dream and enjoy, and, as we wend our way back through the rather squalid little town, we devoutly hope that the ideal beauty and quiet atmosphere of the lovely old chateau may never be disturbed.[1]

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[1] Since 1903, the date of the first edition of this book, Azay le Rideau has been stripped of pictures and furnishings and its collections dispersed.

Chapter XI

CHAMBORD

THE history of Chambord takes one back once more to the counts of Blois, for it formed a portion of the large domain of Blois which passed out of their hands and into the possession of the House of Orleans in the fourteenth century. Under the counts of Blois it had been a feudal manor house, but under the Orleans princes it was used as a sort of hunting lodge, and such it remained until Francis I. decided to transform it into the largest and most magnificent chateau in France. The location, a flat sandy plain, was most unattractive and unsuitable, and, as later in the case of Versailles, its great distance from suitable building material rendered its erection a matter of enormous labour and expense; but with a monarch of the temperament of Francis I., time and money, in the balance against a passing whim, weighed as nothing, and during the early years of his reign Chambord was his passion. For it he left Blois to be finished by Gaston d'Orléans, and on it he is said to have employed eighteen hundred men for twelve years.

Whether the result fulfilled his expectations, or was commensurate with the expenditure of labour and money, it is very difficult for us to-day to judge; as Chambord now possesses no claims to magnificence except size, and none whatever to beauty. But it must be admitted that the Chambord left by Francis I. was a very different affair from the barren barracks which to-day claims a day of one's journey down the Loire. To realise its early grace and splendour, it is necessary to study Du Cerceau's drawing in "Les Plus Excellents Bastiments de France," and read Lippomano's descriptions. The latter writes, "I have seen many magnificent buildings in the course of my life, but never anything more beautiful or more rich. They say that the piles for the foundations of the chateau in this marshy ground have alone cost three hundred thousand francs. . . . I counted one hundred and eighty-six steps in the spiral staircase which occupies the centre. It is constructed with such skill, and is so convenient that a party can go up one side and down the other, six or eight abreast, at a time. . . . The wall that surrounds the park is seven leagues in length, and in the centre rises the chateau with its gilt battlements, with its wings covered with lead, with its pavilions, its towers and its corridors, even as the romancers describe the abode of Morgana or of Alcinoüs."

Of the destructions and restorations that have visited and ruined Chambord, Mrs. Mark Pattison says: "All the outlying work which gave the actual building space and dignity has vanished. . . . Burdened by the weighty labours of Louis XIV., weakened by eight improving years at the hands of Stanislas Leckzinska, mutilated by Marshal Saxe, the Chambord which we now go out from Blois to visit is not the Chambord of Francis I. The broad foundations and heaving arches which rose proudly out of the waters of the moat no longer impress the eye. The truncated mass squats ignobly upon the turf, the waters of the moat are gone, gone are the deep embankments crowned with pierced balustrades, gone is the no longer needed bridge with its guardian lions."

Yet notwithstanding these and other accounts of the early magnificence of Chambord it is much to be doubted if, as an architectural monument, it ever possessed any great degree of artistic value. Any fragment of a truly fine creation always retains that quality of beauty which must have been inherent in every line and mass of it alike. The limb of a Greek statue, what is left of the Parthenon, the wing of Francis at Blois, all are mutilated or incomplete, yet all are alike beautiful and must always remain models of style. But Chambord, deprived of its terrace, its moat and its gilding, has lost all that gave it charm; reduced to the bare skeleton of its architecture, its incongruities of style and coarseness of detail, formerly concealed by accessories, have simply become obvious. In its essential characteristics, therefore, Chambord must always have been what it still remains, big, barren, and coarse; a meaningless and grotesque attempt to reconcile the forms of two opposing principles of style.

The foundations of Chambord were laid in 1526. The architect employed by Francis, Pierre le Nepveu, had just completed Chenonceaux for Catherine Briconnet, a work so successful that much might have been expected from the more monumental commission of the king. That the later effort was entirely to lack the beauty and charm of the earlier creation is a result largely attributable to its enormous size and to the showy and overweening ambition of Francis. The mingling of Gothic and Renaissance forms, so picturesque at Chenonceaux, became incongruous and grotesque when each feature was expanded to such gigantic dimensions. Moreover, as the scale of the ornament must follow that of the building, the delicate detail of the smaller chateau was coarsened at Chambord, until its distinction and beauty were entirely lost.

Chambord in its ground plan surrounds a court, though it was originally enclosed only on three sides. Its angles are covered by round towers, and the main façade is broken by two others. These are all necessarily of enormous girth to correspond with the broad expanse of the walls. The latter are divided into panels by horizontal courses and pilasters, and the towers, window openings, and all matters of detail are arranged with rigid regularity. Except for the round towers therefore, these walls at Chambord would pass for very good Renaissance work, but the roof which crowns them is Gothic run riot. It fairly bristles with towers, turrets, chimneys and dormers, all of which are loaded with heavy and coarse Renaissance ornament. This forest of peaks produces a curious and not a very pleasing effect, especially as seen above walls which, by contrast, and from their great extent, appear blank and barren.

Only a small proportion of the endless suites of apartments at Chambord are now shown, but they are more than sufficient to confirm the impression, already produced by its exterior, of a vast and cheerless barrack. We have not seen so extensive a use of plaster before, and the plaster ornamentation, originally coarse, is now much of it scaled off. The defaced F's and salamanders, which are multiplied everywhere, and the crumbling walls of the four hundred or more rooms, recall and express, perhaps more truly than any other of his creations, the showy and unstable genius of Francis I. It was upon Chambord that he lavished the best of his energies, and a large portion of his means; but his towering ambition made it so vast that it could be neither beautiful nor substantial, and it stands to-day, like a gigantic mushroom unable to survive the loss of its first bloom, a melancholy wreck.

During the reign of its builder, however, Chambord was not considered a failure, and some excuse for its huge dimensions and vast extent may be found in the rapid growth in numbers, and increasing requirements of the court during this reign. Eighteen hundred people, with furniture and baggage in proportion, frequently formed the retinue of the restless king, who constantly wandered from chateau to chateau. At Chambord they could be housed in comparative comfort, an achievement seldom accomplished elsewhere, and there they delighted to assemble, filling the endless corridors and enormous salons with the life and laughter which alone could render the place endurable, and finding a never-failing amusement in the intricacies of the double spiral of the central staircase which is still the chief feature of interest in the huge chateau.

In 1539, Francis entertained Charles V. at Chambord, "with great magnificence and profuse hospitality," an effort, no doubt, to impress his long-time rival with the vast resources of his kingdom and the superior wealth and refinement of France. The astute Charles, whose journey across France at that time literally placed his life in his enemy's hands, expressed all the necessary admiration for this marvel of the Renaissance. Only a small portion of the immense pile was finished, but Charles declared that he saw even in that an epitome of all that man's genius and industry could accomplish. By such complaisance he fanned the flame of Francis' vanity, insured his own safety, and at the same time concealed his actual designs in his diplomatic relations with France, as well as a certain amount of tampering with the fidelity of the servants and courtiers of the French king.

Francis' last visit to Chambord was in 1545, scarcely two years before his death. Only a little more than fifty years of age, he should have been in the prime of life and full of health and vigor. But with a constitution already exhausted by years of dissipation, Francis was already a physical wreck, and a prey to periods of profound melancholy. His devoted sister, Marguerite of Navarre, came with him, and employed all the gentle arts of which she was mistress to soothe and entertain him, but with little success. The old couplet which Brantôme claims to have read cut on a window pane at Chambord,

"Toute femme varie
Mal habile qui s'y fie"

is said to have been traced by Francis in reply to Marguerite's defence of her sex. It must be admitted that the authenticity of this couplet is a good deal disputed, but there are authorities who claim not only that it was traced by Francis, but that it remained on the window at Chambord until Louis

XIV., to please Louise de la Vallière, who resented it as an unmerited slander of her sex, ordered it removed. Perhaps, also, she may have considered its reproach more applicable to Francis himself than to the women who only lived to amuse him.

Notwithstanding the eighteen hundred men who had laboured on it for twelve years, the death of Francis, which occurred at Rambouillet, in 1547, saw Chambord still incomplete. Henry II. continued the work, but he did not inherit his father's enthusiasm for the place, and it was pushed with little zeal. Those portions begun or completed by him bear the H. entwined with the crescents of Diane de Poitiers. Later building was carried on by Charles IX. and Louis XIV. The latter erected the low screen at the back, with its ugly and incongruous Mansard attic, which completes the enclosure of the court. All of this later building is inconsiderable as compared with the great body of the chateau, which remains a monument, though a mutilated one, of the reign of Francis I.

The somewhat coarse splendour of Chambord especially appealed to Catherine de Medicis, who was frequently there during the reigns of her three sons. A true Medicis, she loved magnificence; and she also delighted in the especial facilities for intrigue afforded by the famous double staircase, the intricate passages, and innumerable chambers of the great palace. Then too, the lofty central tower formed an admirable resort for those nocturnal investigations which she constantly conducted with her astrologer, Ruggieri. There they often spent long hours in the study of the future by means of the stars, or in planning those little "accidents" by which Catherine is frequently suspected of arranging its course to suit herself.

When the court of Francis II. was driven from Amboise by the horrors of the fearful massacre, they came to Chambord, where the gayest of revelries were indulged in to dispel the cloud that hung over the young king. So large a retinue accompanied the court at this time that the Venetian Ambassador in one of his letters likens it to the migration of a populous city. The young and brilliant Marie Stuart queened it right royally at these revels, but her short reign was soon ended, and those who immediately succeeded her were to fall more and more under the blight of Catherine's intrigues. In 1567, Charles IX. came to Chambord to expend in the mad energy of a boar hunt the fury to which he was occasionally aroused by the tortuous policy of his mother. Catherine followed, as soon as she was able, his hasty flight from Paris, and by the use of arts of which she was past mistress, soon recovered the influence which she was always in terror of losing over this most wayward of her sons.

Later courts came less and less often to Chambord. It soon came to be considered too far from Paris, and royal sojourns became more and more infrequent, not only here but at all the other chateaux of Touraine, while new palaces began to spring up in the more immediate vicinity of that new centre of court life. We hear only of an occasional visit of the dull court of the shy, clumsy and suspicious Louis XIII., or of the pompous one of Louis XIV. It is said by some, to have been during one of the rare visits of the former king to Chambord, that he furnished his court with so much secret amusement in the famous episode with Mademoiselle d'Hautefort. The story goes that Louis discovered one day in the hand of his fair friend a note which he suspected would compromise the queen. Mademoiselle d'Hautefort refused his demand for it, and thrusting it into her bosom defied him to seize it, whereupon the king advanced to capture it with a pair of tongs. Whether these tongs were the small and silver variety known to-day as sugar tongs, or the clumsy iron instruments then and now in use at the fireplace has been discussed with much gravity by some historians. Also the occurrence of the episode at Chambord is not undisputed, though the incident has furnished food for ridicule these many years.

In 1626, Louis XIII. gave Chambord to his equally stupid brother, the dull and prosy Gaston, Duc d'Orléans. He is said to have attempted to improve it, but happily accomplished less than at Blois. Like his mother, Marie de Medicis, he was constantly occupied with petty intrigues, and was finally in an almost permanent state of conspiracy against the king. It will be remembered that Gaston d'Orléans was implicated in the plot that cost Cinq Mars and De Thou their lives, and that he saved his own head by betraying his confederates. The plot of Victor Hugo's "Marion Delorme" is of this period and one of its scenes is laid at Chambord.

At the death of Gaston d'Orléans Chambord reverted to the crown, but Louis XIV. cared little for it. After all its cost of time and money, and its magnificent extent, he considered that it lent itself badly to the theatrical pomps that he loved. He therefore visited it only eight or nine times during all his long reign. His first visit was in 1660, shortly after his marriage with Maria Thérèse, but his most famous one was that which was made the occasion of the first presentation of Molière's "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme." This occurred in 1670, and the attendant to-day points out one arm of the great upper hall as the scene of the production and its accompanying festivities.

During the early years of the reign of Louis XV., Chambord became the asylum of the father of the queen, the deposed king of Poland, Stanislas Leckzinska. He, also, is said to have attempted to "improve" it, but his stay was not long enough to accomplish much. Later it was made the reward of Marshal Saxe for his famous victory at Fontenoy. Marshall Saxe spent a number of years and finally died at Chambord. These years were by no means dull ones at the old chateau, for the handsome and brilliant old soldier knew well how to enliven its tedium. Earlier the lover of Adrienne Lecouvreur, he was accompanied to Chambord by another actress, Mademoiselle Verrières, whose daughter Aurora married a M. Dupin de Francueil, one of the Dupins of Chenonceaux, and became the mother of Georges Sand.

The Revolution dismantled and disfigured the old chateau, leaving Chambord a bare shell. The government at one time intended to destroy it entirely, but as they found themselves fully occupied nearer Paris it was left unmolested. Napoleon erected the domain into the principality of Wagram, and bestowed it upon Berthier, whom he created Prince de Wagram with a pension of five hundred thousand francs. Louis XVIII. discontinued the pension and the Princesse de Wagram, finding herself unable to maintain the chateau without it, solicited permission to sell it. It was then purchased by national subscription and bestowed upon the infant son of the Duc de Berri, the Duc de Bordeaux, who thereupon took the title of Comte de Chambord. Later, as the last of the elder, or Bourbon branch of the House of Valois, the Comte de Chambord was known to royalists as Henry V.; and the visitor to Chambord to-day is shown, in what are called the king's apartments, some rather distressing tapestry hangings embroidered for him in cross-stitch by royalist ladies, who fondly hoped to see him on the throne of France.

The Comte de Chambord spent most of his life in exile, and so was spared the doubtful pleasure of frequent or long sojourns at Chambord. It is said that he made only two or three visits to it. At his death without direct heirs in 1883, he bequeathed it to the Comte de Parma and his brother the Duc de Bardi, who belong to the Spanish branch of the House of Bourbon. Considerable dissatisfaction was felt and expressed in France that an estate presented by the people of France should not have been returned to them or at least to a French subject. The Comte de Parma usually resides at Trieste, and the chateau of Chambord is now rarely occupied.

Chambord is most easily reached from Blois by a drive of about two hours, partially following the Loire, and partially across a flat plain; the latter largely planted with vineyards. The road is not an especially interesting one, and, after traversing it once, one is glad to return by the longer and more attractive route through the forests of Chambord and Boulogne, which also permits a visit to the charming little chateaux of Cheverny and Beauregard. Neither is famous for either architecture or history, but, even overshadowed as they are by the greater splendours of Blois and Chambord, both are well worth while. Cheverny possesses a refined and quiet charm of style and environment, with the added grace of tasteful and historic furnishing, and Beauregard is justly famous for a remarkable gallery of historic portraits.

Chapter XII

FONTAINEBLEAU

THE chateau of Fontainebleau is thirty-seven miles from Paris; an hour's ride to-day by the fast express, but a day's journey during the reign of Francis I., when the present great palace was begun. It is perhaps a little distant to be considered one of the Parisian group of palaces, yet in many ways it appears to belong to those later architectural works, which were erected, in and about Paris, as the king and the court came to identify themselves more and more with the French capital.

The name Fontainebleau is said to have been derived from a spring, whose source is now lost, called the *Fontaine de Belle Eau,* but which probably still feeds the ancient pond in the garden. By the side of this old pond, on the site of the present huge chateau, stood an old hunting lodge, to which Louis VII. first gave importance by adding to it a chapel, dedicated to St. Saturnin, and consecrated by Thomas à Becket.

Later kings who favoured Fontainebleau were

Philip Augustus, Louis IX., Philip IV., who was born and died there, Charles V., who founded its library and Francis I., who rebuilt it; after which all the kings and queens of France down to Louis XIV. were frequently to be found there.

The transformation of Fontainebleau was begun by Francis I. in 1527, a date only a few years later than those given for Chenonceaux, Azay le Rideau, and Chambord, but the work in Touraine was executed by Frenchmen, and is more distinctively French in its character than that at Fontainebleau, which was very early entrusted to a group of Italians. Il Rosso, who was the first of these, was also the first Italian of note who is known to have been employed in directing the works undertaken at the various chateaux of France. He was a Florentine pupil of Michael Angelo, and was first employed by Francis as a painter; the decoration of the interior walls of Fontainebleau being given into his charge in 1531. In 1541, Sebastian Serlio of Bologna was made *surintendant des bastiments et architecte de Fontainebleau.* A little later another painter was imported from Italy, Primaticcio, a pupil of Giulio Romano, and Primaticcio soon became a rival of Rosso, who until then had been recognized as the head of the Italian colony at Fontainebleau.

The story goes that Francis, who was always longing to patronize some new genius, entreated

Giulio Romano, a pupil of Raphael, then engaged on the Palazzo del Té at Mantua, to come to him. That painter refused for himself, but sent his pupil, Primaticcio, who soon supplanted Rosso in popular favour, when the latter became a prey to furious jealousy, took poison and died. Then Primaticcio painted out all of Rosso's work, and filled its place with his own.

Nicolo del Abbate, another painter, completes the list of important names of the group of Italians who at this time were known as the "School of Fontainebleau," and who were all of that larger group of artists whom Francis, after the sack of Rome in 1527, was able to tempt to the French court. None of these were so famous as Lionardo da Vinci, and Andrea del Sarto, who had followed him north in 1516 and 1518, but the School of Fontainebleau exerted a considerable influence upon the development of the French Renaissance; and the works of Benvenuto Cellini in bronze, and Girolamo della Robbia in majolica, deservedly rank high.

The latter, Della Robbia, was especially employed upon the execution of tiles for the decoration of the famous chateau of Longchamps, erected by Francis in the Bois de Boulogne, which was also begun in 1527. The use of tiles, friezes, and medallions of enamelled terra cotta for architectural decoration is supposed to have been suggested to Francis by the Moorish tiles which he had seen so freely used in

Spain during his imprisonment there, and the chateau of Longchamps, from its supposed resemblance to Spanish palaces, was later known as the Chateau of Madrid. We have much to regret in the entire destruction of this chateau, together with the Robbia terra cottas which formed so large a share of its beauty and magnificence, but it is possible to learn much of both from descriptions and Du Cerceau's plans. We are told that Francis lavished upon it the utmost resources of wealth and art, and, according to the best authorities, it was much more to be admired architecturally than Fontainebleau. It had a distinction of style and a unity of design apparently not attempted in the latter chateau, or, if attempted, carried out with little success.

It is said that Madrid was the work of French architects, its decoration only, being confided to an Italian, and that as an architectural creation it was distinctly French in style. But although Fontainebleau was begun by French builders, within three years it was given entirely into the hands of "Maître Roux," or "Il Rosso."

As it stands to-day, Fontainebleau is so large and heterogeneous a pile that a detailed study of the work of its successive builders must prove, not only long, but, from lack of marked architectural merit, exceedingly wearisome. Moreover authorities are confusing and contradictory as to just what was accomplished by each builder. Among the few generally accepted facts we find that the destruction of the old hunting lodge was nearly complete when Francis I. undertook the transformation of Fontainebleau, but that occasional portions of the old walls were left, notably in the "Cour Ovale," which was apparently the heart of the old lodge. This court is still the most pretentious effort architecturally at Fontainebleau, but the old walls have been so altered that they are now difficult to discover.

The rebuilding of the chapel of St. Saturnin on the south side of this court was begun, perhaps completed, by the French builders who were employed by Francis in the few years before the work was given up to the Italian school. To them also is attributed, by some authorities, the "Galerie de François I.," and some portions of the "Cour du Cheval Blanc." Rosso was employed upon their decoration, and later he is said to have rebuilt the Cour Ovale as well as its chief entrance, the famous Porte Dorée, the latter now unfortunately spoiled by a coarse restoration. By some, the gallery of Francis is also credited to Rosso, but it is probable that he only decorated it. The peristyle of the Cour Ovale is said to be the work of Serlio, to whom also the credit is probably due for much of the other building undertaken by Francis I., of which some portions of the Cour du Cheval Blanc and the "Galerie d'Henri II." are the most important.

Under Henry II., Philibert de l'Orme is said to have been employed at Fontainebleau, and under Charles IX. the central pavilion of the Cour du Cheval Blanc was erected. Henry IV. spent two million five hundred thousand livres upon Fontainebleau, and, after Francis I., was the largest builder there. His most important addition was the long frescoed gallery, replaced under Napoleon I. and Louis XVIII., by the present "Galerie de Diane," now used as a library.

The palace as a whole is of enormous extent, but no apparent design was followed in the rambling ground plan, which as Ferguson remarks, "is as irregular as anything in Gothic art." But beyond its irregularity there is little that is Gothic at Fontainebleau. The early introduction of Italians there, and of Italians who, with one exception, were artists rather than architects, naturally resulted in the elimination of Gothic features, and the introduction of classical details and Italian styles of decoration, all without the attainment of much of architectural interest; and beyond the Cour Ovale, with its fine colonnades and admirable capitals, there is little at Fontainebleau except low ranges of two or three stories, chiefly of brick, with intervening courts, and pavilions with tent-like roofs.

The beauty and interest, therefore, which attract thousands of visitors each year to Fontainebleau are found largely in its splendid interiors. There may be seen what are apparently interminable suites of chambers and salons, decorated and furnished with the greatest magnificence, and as nearly as possible as they were originally done, by the kings of France from Francis I. down to Napoleon I. These form altogether what is probably the most complete and splendid series of examples in France of the styles of interior decoration and furnishings produced by the succeeding periods of the Renaissance.

Much of the decorative work is now a restoration, though some portions of the old remain. The last restorations were undertaken by Louis Philippe, who found the palace in a sad state owing to time, neglect and the violence of the Revolution, and the work he left unfinished was carried on by Napoleon III., who spent untold sums upon it. What was lacking of furnishing was also supplied, and to-day the interiors of Fontainebleau are, not only as far as possible historically correct, but are a museum of rare works of art of the French Renaissance.

There one may see many magnificent tapestries, among them a series of the History of Psyche, another of Triumphs after N. Coypel; others are, The Seasons after Le Brun, the History of Esther, the Chase of Louis XV., and the Elements after Audran. The "Salle du Conseil" still preserves its exquisite panels by Boucher, with furnishings covered with tapestry of Beauvais. There are superb pictures of all schools brought from the Louvre, Boulle clocks of the period of Louis XIV. and of the Empire, Boulle and Riesener presses and cabinets, inlaid consoles, and carvings of Gouthière, cabinets and tables of the earlier Renaissance, magnificent specimens of Sèvres and other porcelains, marbles, and historical curiosities of all kinds. Among the latter are the bed of Marie Antoinette, the throne of Napoleon, and the cradle of the king of Rome.

The large paved court by which a visitor to-day gains admission to Fountainebleau is surrounded on three sides by long low buildings, one façade only, being broken by pavilions of moderate height. The only feature which makes much pretence to architectural effect is the double flight of steps, whose elaborate double curves were built by Lemercier for Louis XIII. It replaces an earlier staircase built by Philibert de l'Orme; and leads to the small and unimposing main entrance.

This court was long called the Cour du Cheval Blanc from a plaster copy of the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, placed here by Catherine de Medicis but now long destroyed. A later name given to it was "Le Cour des Adieux" in memory of Napoleon's farewell to what was left of his Old Guard, which took place here before his departure for Elba. The historic scene is commemorated in Gerard's famous picture *Les Adieux de Fountaine-*

Fontainebleau.

Salon of Francis I.

bleau. The emperor stood at the foot of the curved staircase, and, in moving words, addressed his long tried companions-at-arms, who were drawn up in a circle around him. In conclusion he said,[1] "'*Je voudrais vous serrer tous dans mes bras, mais laissez-moi embrasser ce drapeau qui vous représente. . . . Alors attirant à lui le général Petit, qui portait le drapeau de la vieille garde, et qui était le modèle accompli de l'héroïsme modeste, il pressa sur sa poitrine le drapeau et le général au milieu des cris et des larmes des assistants, puis il se jeta dans le fond de sa voiture, les yeux humides, et ayant attendri les commissaires eux-mêmes chargés de l'accompagner.*" Scarcely a year later, when recalled for the period of one hundred days, Napoleon again at Fountainebleau reviewed the same troops in this court before marching with them to Paris.

At the right of the Cour du Cheval Blanc is the theatre which still retains its arrangements for the emperor, the empress and the court. This theatre is not always shown, and is not of especial importance except as recalling the fête days of the empire.

The most magnificent of the early apartments are the salons of Francis I., Henry II. and Henry IV. The first, that of Francis I. is a long narrow gallery with a flat ceiling richly panelled in walnut wood. The lower walls are also done in walnut, the panels bearing the royal fleurdelys, the F's, and the familiar salamanders, of Francis.

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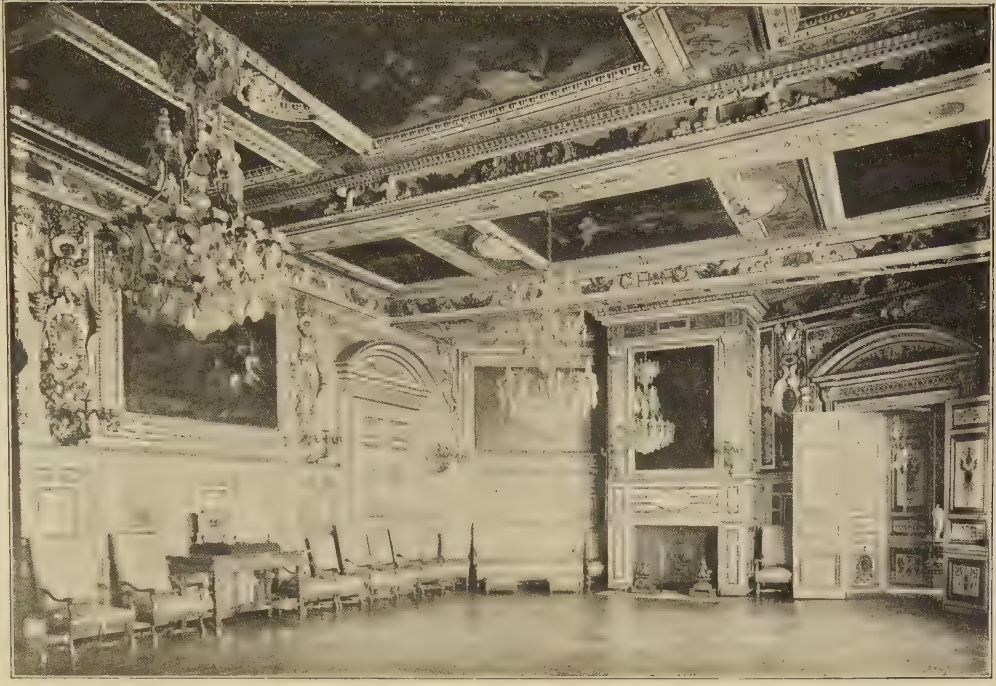
[1] Thiers.

It was the decoration of this salon, originally done by Rosso, that was painted out by Primaticcio, but the work left by the latter was partially effaced by Anne of Austria, whose sense of propriety was shocked by the somewhat voluptuous tendency of the school of Giulio Romano. The frescoes are now all restored, and one, that of the Danae, is considered to preserve some traces of the actual work of Primaticcio. The subjects are all mythological, and were chiefly chosen for an allegorical reference to the life of Francis I. The stucco ornaments are also said to have been the work of Primaticcio, and like the frescoes, show that ripe fulness of the later Italian schools which especially appealed to the sensuous taste of Francis I. As an example of the later years of that king, and of work more Italian than French in style, this salon is probably unsurpassed in France; and, while none of its pictures ever possessed great merit as works of art, and many of its features, taken singly, are somewhat coarse in style, the total effect is harmonious and rich to an unusual degree, rendering it not only a notable salon but a beautiful example of interior decoration.

The gallery of Henry II., or the "Salle du Bal," was also built by Francis but originally decorated by Henry. At present this salon is the most splen-

Fontainebleau.

Salon des Medicis.



did of the restorations of Louis Philippe. It is nearly square, but divided by two rows of arches into a broad central hall with aisles on either side. The ceiling of panelled wood is exceedingly rich, but the lower wooden panels of the walls are much simpler in design than those of the salon of Francis I. The Doric columns of the chimney, as well as much of the decorative detail, are much more classical in style than any work of the French Renaissance that we have yet seen, but the frescoes are still of the florid school of Giulio Romano, executed it is said by Primaticcio and his pupil Niccolo del Abbate. The ciphers and the subjects of the decorations are all chosen to do honour to Henry II. and his favourite, Diane de Portiers. There are H's and ♓'s, crescents, the implements of the chase, and in more than one fresco the chief figure is the goddess Diana herself. There are sixty paintings in all upon these walls including eight large compositions, and they are considered by some authorities to be the finest decorations of the kind existing in France.

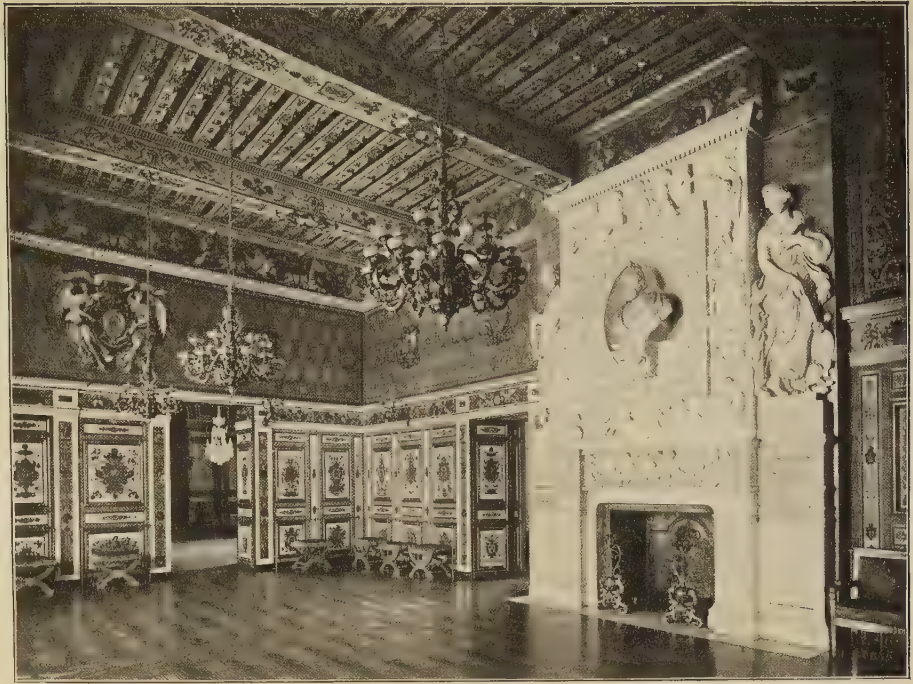
The "Salons de Reception" are now splendidly hung with tapestries. They were built by Francis I. but one at least was redecorated by Henry IV. This "Salon des Medicis" or, "de Louis XIII.", is the room in which that king was born. An interesting bit of its furniture to-day is the first glass mirror ever seen in France. It was sent by the Venetians as a present to Henry IV.

The so-called "Salles de St. Louis" were also decorated by Henry IV. One of these, the "Salle des Gardes," is especially magnificent with decorative work in the style of another pupil of Raphael, Giovanni da Undine. The delicate conventional designs of this painter afford the most marked contrast to the full, florid manner developed by Giulo Romano and his school. Giovanni da Undine painted tiny animals, flowers, and still life, and designed the most elaborate and delicate arabesques. His most famous work, the decoration of the Loggia of the Vatican, executed under the supervision of Raphael, was imitated in the Salle des Gardes. The work is said to have been executed by French hands, and the splendid chimney piece is claimed to be, partially at least, the work of Germain Pilon, one of the early sculptors of the French Renaissance frequently employed by Catherine de Medicis. It is probable therefore that the chimney was at least begun for her, and that the bust of Henry IV., which fills the central niche, was placed there when the room was finished by that king. An equestrian relief of Henry also adorns the chimney of the adjoining "Salon St. Louis."

The "Salle du Trône" was earlier divided into two rooms, one of which was the bedroom of the king, and the other his cabinet. They were of the period of Charles IX.; the present arrangement and decoration being of that of Louis XIII. A

Fontainebleau.

Salle des Gardes.



portrait of that king by Champaigne now adorns the chimney-piece, but the throne was set up by Napoleon. The adjoining Salle du Conseil is famous for its panelled walls decorated by Boucher. By many they are considered the most beautiful decorations in the palace. The Salle du Conseil was used by Louis Philippe as a *salon de famille.*

The bedchamber of Marie Antoinette is hung with magnificently brocaded Lyons silk which was presented to that queen, upon the occasion of her marriage, by the city of Lyons. The heavily decorated ceiling is similar to that of the Salle du Trône, and probably of the same period. This chamber is said to have been occupied by five queens, all Maries, Marie de Medicis, Marie Thérèse, Marie Antoinette, Marie Louise and Marie Amélie. The metal bolts of the windows of the adjoining boudoir were wrought for Marie Antoinette by the royal hands of Louis XVI., and are still pointed out as an evidence of his skill in working with metals.

The apartments of Napoleon I. lead from the Salle du Conseil, and are all decorated after the style of the first empire. The "Cabinet de l'Abdication" was the scene of his abdication, and the small round table is always pointed out as that upon which the momentous document was signed. The credulous tourist is also always asked to believe that the deep indentation in its surface was caused by the blow struck at that time by the desperate emperor.

The signature of another important paper is recorded at Fontainebleau, that of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which Louis XIV. signed to please Madame de Maintenon, in the small and unpretending apartment, which is still shown as hers.

Besides the chapel of St. Saturnin which is not usually shown, there is at Fontainebleau the somewhat imposing "Chapelle de la Sainte Trinité." The latter was also built by Francis I., but its elaborate decoration is the work of Henry IV., who was induced to undertake it by the criticism of an ambassador, who, after being shown over the palace is reported to have said, "This house would be more beautiful, sire, if God were as well lodged as your majesty."

During the reign of Francis I. the brilliant but migratory court were often at Fontainebleau, and there, besides the school of Italian artists already mentioned, Benvenuto Cellini was frequently to be found employed upon various works in bronze, or even upon ornaments of gold and silver. Francis set him to work to restore the castle gate, and, for the chateau itself, he executed the nymph in bronze which may still be seen at the Louvre. Whether the excessive admiration of Francis for these works, which is recorded by Cellini, is an evidence of the king's bad taste, or the artist's vanity, is a matter open to discussion. Cellini's goldsmith's work was exquisite but his "nymph" is described by Symonds as a "snuff-box ornament enlarged to gigantic size." Cellini in his memoires writes that Francis admired this and other of his designs more than the bronze copies of the Vatican marbles he had recently received.

The sculptor was haughty and overbearing and speedily fell into disfavour with the king's favourite, the Duchesse d'Etampes, and the resulting intrigues have been used by Dumas as the plot for his novel "Ascanio." A brilliant scene in its pages describes Cellini displaying to Francis, in one of the galleries at Fontainebleau, a colossal bronze of Jupiter whose features were those of the king. The scene is taken from the memoires of Cellini himself who tells us that the Duchesse d'Etampes whom he had been so unfortunate as to offend, ordered the exhibition of his colossal Jupiter in a gallery where were already placed a large collection of antique statues, in comparison with which his work was expected to suffer. She also managed to detain the king until so late in the day, that the light was insufficient to see it properly. But the quick witted sculptor managed to turn the latter disadvantage to good account. He concealed bits of candles in the thunderbolts which the god held aloft, and which when lighted produced a most beautiful and mysterious effect. Also, as the king entered, he contrived to move the figure forward a few inches; the slight motion in the half light giving a curious impression of life. The duchess was entirely discomfited according to Cellini, who says that Francis was loud in his praises, considering the Jupiter finer than anything ever accomplished by the Greeks or Romans.

At Fontainebleau, in 1539, Francis I. entertained his dearest foe Charles V. All arrangements were planned and carried out with the greatest magnificence, but the courtly formalities were intended to cover the real purpose of the French king, which was to gain the emperor's consent to his designs upon the duchy of Milan. The astute Charles lent an attentive ear and appeared to take a most favourable view of his rival's schemes, but he also paid assiduous court to the Duchesse d'Etampes, and with such success that the clever favourite actually assisted him in fanning the flame of Francis' vanity, and the latter really fancied that the emperor had yielded everything he desired until Charles was well out of his kingdom. The reward received by the Duchesse d'Etampes for her favours, was a diamond of enormous value, adroitly presented by the emperor, who let it fall into the golden basin of perfumed water, into which he dipped his fingers after dining, and which it was her privilege to hold for him.

In 1544, only three years before his death, Francis removed the royal library to Fontainebleau, adding to it at the same time, the numerous and valuable acquisitions he had made in Italy. As it was also decreed during this reign that a copy of every book printed in France should be sent to the library at Fontainebleau, the collection soon began to assume royal proportions, and, as Francis was a famous maker of beautiful books as well as a purchaser of them, it speedily attained a princely magnificence. The book-covers produced under the orders of Francis I. still rank as among the finest achievements of the art of book making. A few years after the death of Francis his library was removed to Paris where it formed the nucleus of the Bibliothèque Royale, and later the Bibliothèque Nationale.

Chapter XIII

FONTAINEBLEAU (CONTINUED)

HENRY II. added little if anything to the extent of the chateau of Fontainebleau, but that he had a great liking for it is indicated by the magnificence of the decoration of the Salle du Bal. We are told that he was especially fond of Fontainebleau in winter, going there frequently for the enjoyment of winter sports; skating on the pond, and even building snow forts and bombarding them with snow balls. Two splendid fêtes were given at Fontainebleau during this reign. The first celebrated the baptism of the dauphin, the future Francis II.; the second the marriage of the princess Elizabeth with Philip II. of Spain.

During the short reign of Francis II., the restless court journeyed from chateau to chateau, in search of health and strength for the ailing king. From Chambord they came to Fontainebleau, and as usual, the uncles of the young queen were in close attendance. The Cardinal de Lorraine was already Minister of Finance, and, as he had recently dismissed whole regiments of the army with arrears of pay due them, he was followed to Fontainebleau by a long troop of hungry soldiers demanding money or bread. The cardinal became so incensed at their importunities that he dealt with them in the most summary and high-handed manner, causing gibbets to be erected at the gates of the chateau, with notices attached, to the effect, that if any who came to solicit favours were found within the precincts of the palace at the expiration of twenty-four hours, they would be hanged. In reading of such injustice and oppression, one marvels that nearly two hundred and fifty years were to elapse before the Revolution.

A few weeks later an Assembly of Notables was held at Fontainebleau at which Coligny appeared to plead the Protestant cause before the young king. In spite of the awful massacre at Amboise which had been intended as a crushing blow to the Reformed faith, religious strife had waxed more and more bitter. Coligny had finally demanded an opportunity to appear before the king, and the queen-mother had yielded in order to calm passions which threatened to get out of hand. The Duc de Guise was also in attendance at this Fontainebleau Assembly, and, when he noted that Francis was becoming interested in Coligny's able and eloquent speech, he attempted to close the sitting. Coligny then demanded a convocation of the States-General and Catherine, to keep the Guises in check, granted the order.

One glimpse of the widowed queen Marie Stuart at Fontainebleau, is given us in the verses of Ronsard. Michelet says, "All the world knows the beautiful lines, which recall the impression, charming, melancholy, and religious, made upon the poet by the sight of Marie Stuart, in her veil of a widowed queen, in the forest of Fontainebleau. In the verses the trees, the aged oaks and the savage pines, are made to incline their heads and salute her as creature already sainted."

In 1564, Charles IX. gave audience at Fontainebleau to ambassadors from the Pope, and the Catholic princes of Europe, who came demanding that the government of France should recall the concessions made the Protestants in an edict recently signed, called the Pacification of Amboise. The reception of these ambassadors was made the occasion of a great display of magnificence. After a solemn audience with the king there were splendid fêtes and tournaments, and though their demand was not granted, the terms of the edict were never fully observed.

Beyond the above occasion we find little mention of gaieties at Fontainebleau, either during the reign of Charles IX. or Henry III. Even under the reign of Charles, the chateau began to be much neglected. Some portions were allowed to fall into ruin, the gardens were uncultivated, and the beautiful fountain was already crumbling. During the declining health of the king he occasionally came to Fontainebleau, but he took little interest in it, and it is said of the last gloomy years of Charles, that he lived alternately in a tomb and a desert; the Louvre and Fontainebleau.

Henry III. did even less for the chateau, if that were possible, than Charles had done, and by the time Henry IV. was able to take it in hand the place was in a deplorable condition, and his enormous expenditure of time and money was absolutely necessary to render it again fit for the residence of the king of France. Henry IV. not only undertook necessary repairs, but added a splendid new wing, and during his reign Fontainebleau became again the chief residence of the court when not at the Louvre.

In its earlier and happier years the fair châteleine of Fontainebleau was the lovely and gentle Gabrielle d'Estrées, who was undoubtedly as truly attached to the king as he was to her. She was also loved and respected by the entire court. Even the king's sister, that noble woman and staunch Protestant, Catherine of Navarre, was her friend. She made only one enemy, but unfortunately for Gabrielle that enemy was the prime minister, Sully; after Henry the ablest man in the kingdom, and without whom the king would have been shorn of half his greatness.

It was Sully who was the tried companion and close confidant of the entire life of Henry IV., who toned down his excesses, regulated his finances; in a word, who furnished the steadiness and balance lacking in the more volatile character of the king. Henry undoubtedly wished to marry Gabrielle, and Sully was probably jealous of her influence with the king. But his opposition was not all due to jealousy, for so wise and able a man as Sully could not fail to foresee the difficulties. Could their eldest son Cæsar, Duc de Vendôme, be legitimized and succeed to the throne? It was very doubtful! Consequently Sully opposed every move of Gabrielle which tended to a strengthening of her position, and the situation rapidly became exceedingly strained, with the king literally placed between two opposing forces.

Popular discontent soon furnished another source of vexation to the much tried soul of the tender hearted Henry. An heir was necessary to insure the peace and prosperity of the kingdom. The people feared the troubles of a disputed succession. It was becoming more and more necessary that the king should marry. There were not wanting those who frankly told him so, and that the stability of his throne depended upon it.

Strange stories were told and portents recorded. In August 1598, while Henry was hunting in the forest at Fontainebleau, he thought he heard the hounds and horns and cries of hunters. Surprised that any one should dare to interrupt the chase of the king, he sent to arrest the rash intruder. The Comte de Soissons, who scoured the forest in their neighbourhood reported when he returned that he heard the cries, but that he saw only a huge man in black, who disappeared in the thick undergrowth, as he approached, crying, "*M'attendez-vous*," or perhaps "*M'entendez-vous.*" The king, fearing an ambush, returned to the chateau. A report of the circumstance was circulated in Paris, where the devout assured themselves that the apparition had said, "*Amendez-vous*," that is, "Repent and leave your mistress."

The popular superstition which resulted ended in the most sinister predictions from the churches, which struck terror to the timid and fearful Gabrielle. The king, to comfort her, redoubled his attentions. He gave her presents such as only queens had ever received; gifts made to him by the cities of France; the plate of gold upon which he had received the keys of Calais, and even the ring with which he had espoused France at his consecration.

The approach of Easter brought matters to a crisis, for, according to ancient custom, Holy Week belonged to the confessor of the king, and this year he demanded the separation of the lovers. Henry must remain at Fontainebleau, and Gabrielle go to Paris. She resisted to the full extent of her power, Paris frightened her — she would be alone there — the whole city also was in an unusually turbulent condition. The king had lately forced the registration of the Edict of Nantes, and the preachers had retaliated by threatening assassination. Two suspected monks had recently been hung on the Place de Grève.

The situation was far from reassuring, but Henry felt obliged to yield to the popular clamour and send Gabrielle to Paris. To her tears and fears he replied "*Eh quoi? ne suis-je pas roi? Qui oserait.*" But he too, felt depressed, and remained at her side until the last possible moment, attending her with the entire court even as far as Melun, and himself riding by the side of her litter.

Within a few days the announcement of Gabrielle's horrible illness, undoubtedly from poison, was brought by a quick messenger to Fontainebleau. Henry leaped upon his horse and made half the distance to Paris before he was met by a second courier announcing her death. Then he returned to Fontainebleau and shut himself up with his grief, which, according to most accounts, was stormy and deep. With the coming of Sully, who congratulated instead of condoling with him, the atmosphere began to lighten, and Henry was soon obliged to acknowledge that the removal of Gabrielle cleared up what had become an impossible situation. He could never have forced France or the church to recognise a marriage with her.

He would never have married another while she lived and the kingdom needed an heir.

Every possible honour was paid Gabrielle. The king himself wore mourning for three months; he wore black, though the usual mourning for kings was violet. He sent the entire court to a solemn ceremonial service at St. Germain l'Auxerrois. He also received the condolences of ambassadors, and, what was more surprising, those of the Parliament, which sent a solemn deputation to Fontainebleau.

For six months Henry spent much time at Fontainebleau, devoting himself to the children of Gabrielle of whom he was passionately fond, but also passing much time alone. Then the court revolted at the solemn sadness of the place. Fontainebleau was full of memories of the dead mistress, and it was deemed necessary to get the king away.

A hunt was therefore arranged, and rumours were allowed to reach Henry's ears of a beauty then to be found at a neighbouring chateau. Henrietta d'Entraigues was the daughter of the Comte d'Entraigues and Marie Touchet, a one time favourite of Charles IX. She was young, beautiful and witty, but bold and ambitious, and a dangerous intrigante. She aimed at becoming queen of France, and demanded from the king a written promise of marriage.

Henry was soon violently in love, and one morning at Fontainebleau, a few weeks after his first meeting with Henrietta, he led Sully into a private gallery, and handing to him a paper said "Read that." It was the promise demanded by the new beauty. Sully read it, and promptly tore it up. "You must be mad!" exclaimed the king. "Would to God, sire, that I were the only mad man in France," replied Sully, and proceeded to offer some wholesome though very unpalatable advice. Henry received it in silence, then picked up the scraps of paper, and drew up a fresh document to the same effect, which was delivered to the triumphant Henrietta, and later was to be used with telling effect in the diplomatic intrigues, not only of France, but of Europe.

The first meeting between Henry IV. and Marie de Medicis took place at Lyons, a marriage by proxy having been celebrated at Florence. From Lyons the new queen was to be conducted by the king to Fontainebleau, there to remain for a few days before her entry into Paris. But Henry was not over pleased with her somewhat florid charms, and, after a few days of her society, posted off ahead with the fair Henrietta, leaving his royal bride to follow on alone. He had written to Sully that the queen was *terribly* strong and robust, and possibly foresaw those hand to hand encounters with her which Providence had in store for him. As the king recovered his gallantry within a few days, he joined the queen at Nemours, and they arrived at Fontainebleau together.

It was at Fontainebleau in 1601 that the Dauphin was born who became Louis XIII. The nation was overjoyed at the birth of an heir, and the king was so delighted that he ran about embracing everybody. The chateau was full of all sorts of people. The nurses remonstrated with the king for allowing so many persons to enter and disturb the queen; but he replied, "This child belongs to the world, and everybody must see him and rejoice." "[1] Taking the new-born babe in his arms, he asked the blessing of Heaven upon him and gave him his own benediction. Then, putting the child's hand on the hilt of his sword, he prayed that he might never draw the sword except for the glory of God, and the good of his subjects." The whole of the cannon of the Paris arsenal was fired to celebrate the auspicious occasion and with such good effect that it was distinctly heard at Fontainebleau.

The famous last interview between Henry IV. and the traitor, Biron, occurred at Fontainebleau in 1602. The intrigues of his early friend and fellow-soldier had been repeatedly forgiven by the king until royal clemency, even that of Henry IV., could go no further. Biron was summoned to attend the court, then at Fontainebleau. The king had absolute proof in his hands of his treason but so reluctant was he to condemn him that he gave the Marshal, for Biron was a Marshal of France, even a third private interview, with opportunity to confess and be forgiven. But Biron believed himself safe and persisted in his denials, and Henry at last left him with the words "*Adieu, Baron de Biron*" which deprived him of his office and announced the first sentence of his degradation. A few weeks later he was tried and executed as a traitor to France.

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[1] L'Estoile.

Louis XIII. was frequently at Fontainebleau; and the names of his queen, Anne of Austria, Richelieu, and many others are closely associated with it. Henrietta, queen of Charles I. of England and sister of Louis XIII. was given a refuge at Fontainebleau after the execution of her husband. It was at Fontainebleau also that Louis XIII. fell in love with Louise de Lafayette. We have an account of the queen's *lever*, which tells how the melancholy king sat silent in a corner, but never allowed his eyes to leave the face of the charming maid of honour. Richelieu, it is hinted, tried to make a tool of Mademoiselle de Lafayette, but for once he failed in his designs.

A strange guest came to Fontainebleau during the early years of the reign of Louis XIV.; no less a person than Christina, queen of Sweden, daughter of the great Gustavus Adolphus. Her portrait as drawn by the king himself is given by Guizot. "She is tall, she has a good arm, a hand white and well made, but rather a man's than a woman's, a high shoulder — a defect which she so well conceals by the singularity of her dress, her walk and her gestures, that you might make a bet about it. Her face is large without being defective, all her features are the same and strongly marked; a pretty tolerable turn of countenance, set off by a very singular headdress; that is, a man's wig, very big, and very much raised in front; the top of the head is a tissue of hair, and the back is a woman's style of headdress. Sometimes she also wears a hat; her bodice, laced behind, crosswise, is something like our doublets, her chemise bulging out all around her petticoat, which she wears rather badly fastened and not over straight. She is always very much powdered, with a good deal of pomade, and almost never puts on gloves. She has, at the very least, as much swagger and haughtiness as the great Gustavus, her father, can have had; she is mighty civil and coaxing, speaks eight languages, and principally French, as if she had been born in Paris. She knows as much about it as all our Academy and Sorbonne put together, has an admirable knowledge of painting as well as of everything else, and knows all the intrigues of our court better than I. In fact she is an extraordinary person."

This "extraordinary person" made herself yet more extraordinary by having her first equerry, Monaldeschi, assassinated before her very eyes at

Fontainebleau where she accused him of having betrayed her, and then she considered it astonishing and in very bad taste that the court of France should be shocked at her behaviour.

Under Louis XIV. the court life of France was largely transferred to St. Germain or Versailles, and Fontainebleau was reserved for an autumn visit, where in its magnificent forest, the chase was indulged in, or indoor life was enlivened by the performance of operas or tragedies.

In 1717, two years after the accession of Louis XV., Peter the Great was entertained at Fontainebleau and again in 1725. In 1723, the young king was married in its chapel of La Trinité to Marie Leckzinska, and it was not until 1745 that Madame de Pompadour was given apartments there. Under her enlightened patronage Voltaire and Rousseau came to superintend the production of pieces. "Le Devin du Village" was first heard by the court at Fontainebleau in 1752, and made an immediate success. It was intended to present Rousseau to the king the following day, but the timid author took fright and fled, and so lost the pension promised him.

A famous performance of Tancrède was given at Fontainebleau in 1768, when Charles VII. of Sweden was the guest of honour. In 1771 and 1773, shortly before the accession of Louis XVI., his brothers, the Comtes de Provence and d'Artois were married there to the princesses of Savoy, when the chateau was given up to brilliant fêtes. Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette continued the custom of annual visits to Fontainebleau. The latter delighted in the freedom of the magnificent forest, and Louis devoted much time to his work in metals.

The Revolution and the empire each left its mark upon Fontainebleau, although the destructive effects of the former have been measurably effaced. Several rooms were decorated and furnished by Napoleon I., and still remain in the style of the First Empire. Pope Pius VII. was domiciled at this chateau when he came into France to crown Napoleon and Josephine, Emperor and Empress of the French, and there in 1810, the infant son of Louis Napoleon and Hortense Beauharnais who was to become Napoleon III. was baptised in the chapel of La Trinité.

The abdication and farewell of Napoleon I. are the last events of importance at Fontainebleau. One might mention the marriage of the eldest son of Louis Philippe, the Duc d'Orléans, earlier the Duc de Chartres, with Hélène of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, which occurred in the famous gallery of Henry II., and it is possible to recall the fêtes and entertainments of the Second Empire, but the absorbing interest at Fontainebleau is of an earlier period and its most splendid figures are Francis I.

and Henry IV. These two kings not only gave the huge chateau its size and splendour, but dominate its history. Napoleon I. may stand beside them, may even tower above them, because of his brilliant abilities and tragic fate, but after all he was an intruder, and Fontainebleau belongs to the Valois kings.

The visitor to Fontainebleau must still divide his attention between the old chateau and the royal forest, the latter the most extensive and magnificent in France. Many pretty villages hang upon its edges, and in recent years one of them, Barbizon, has become famous as the rendezvous or home of another "School of Fontainebleau." There one may see the humble cottage which was the home of Millet, and find in the now almost deserted inn (Gaune) rough sketches left on the walls by Rousseau and others of the artists who were wont to gather there, and who found their chief inspiration in and about the old forest.

Louvre.

**Pavillon de l'Horloge, with
Wing of Lescot to the Left.**

Chapter XIV

LOUVRE

THE site of the modern great palace of the Louvre has a long and checkered history. It is believed to have been occupied as a residence of French kings since the reign of Dagobert (628), and the origin of the word Louvre, which Hamerton considers to have been derived from a Saxon word, "Leower," or "Lower," and which signified a fortified camp, indicates a still earlier fortification there.

According to one authority, Dagobert built a hunting lodge on the site of this old fortification, which was outside the early walls of Paris. In 1200 Philip Augustus transformed the earlier buildings into a fortress, which was used as a state prison, and which a later wall enclosed within the city limits. This fortress of Philip Augustus was probably little more than the huge dungeon or tower, which for many years was the dominating feature of the growing pile, and to which the name Louvre more particularly belonged. To this great tower the lords of France came to renew their feudal oaths, hence the expression that the fiefs were held *de la tour du Louvre*, which was changed after its destruction by Francis I. to *de la cour du Louvre.*

St. Louis added to the fortress of Philip Augustus a great hall, which bore his name, and in which, Froissart tells us, he proclaimed the last crusade. "On the twenty-fifth of May," he writes, "the king, though weak and sickly through his life of austerity and self-denial, entered the great hall of the Louvre bearing in his hands the holy crown of thorns.[1] There he had convened his barons and the princes of the blood, and in their presence he took the cross, and none durst refuse to follow his example."

Under Charles V. great additions were made to the old Louvre. A rectangular court was enclosed by walls and towers, and surrounded by a moat supplied from the Seine. Numerous apartments were also constructed, and during the next few reigns the Louvre was the frequent residence of the court. One of the towers erected by Charles V. was called the Library Tower. In it he collected a library of nine hundred and fifty volumes. This was the foundation of the Royal Library, and it is probable that the precious books given by Charles

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[1] It will be remembered that St. Louis purchased the crown of thorns of Jean de Brienne, King of Jerusalem, and his son-in-law Baldwin, Emperor of Constantinople, for three million francs.

VI., as a wedding-gift to his brother Louis d'Orléans were taken from it.

Even after the above additions, the Louvre was hardly large or fine enough for all court functions, and after Charles VII. left it for the "Hôtel des Tournelles," it is probable that little more was done for it until it was finally taken in hand by Francis I. During the most of this period of nearly two hundred years from Charles VII. to Francis I., the Louvre was used as a prison or an arsenal, and was little prized save for its strength. As its walls came to be closely surrounded by many of the hotels of the nobility, doubtless clustered under them for protection, its towers soon looked down upon a confused and picturesque mass of pointed roofs, chimneys and smaller towers. Among them were the historic Hôtels de Bourbon, and de Longueville.

At this time the Louvre itself "was a building of many different blocks. . . . The façades presented the appearance of blank walls capriciously pierced at irregular intervals with numerous small openings. On all sides the chateau was girt about by a host of towers, and surrounded by wide and deep moats. These towers, with the exception of those at the gateways and angles, were distributed without any semblance of plan or regularity. Some reached only the height of the first story, others, more lofty, were surmounted by weather-cocks painted with the national arms."

The Hôtel des Tournelles which became the Parisian residence of Charles VII., Louis XI., Charles VIII., Louis XII., and Francis I., and which took its name from its endless number of turrets, occupied the site, now the open square called the Place des Vosges, near the Place de la Bastile. In its original state the hôtel stood in a wood which was called the *Parc des Tournelles*. The Duke of Bedford, while regent of France, lived in this palace, and Louis XI. received his wife, Margaret of Scotland, there. It was little used during the later years of this reign as Louis XI. made his usual residence at Plessis lez Tours. Charles VIII. also spent little time in Paris, but Louis XII. and Anne of Brittany were often to be found at the Tournelles, and it was there that Louis XII. died.

Even before Francis I. brought his rapidly growing court to the Tournelles, that palace began to be recognised as most uncomfortable and unsuitable for a royal residence. The location had become notoriously unsanitary. An open sewer ran directly under its windows, where it was, not only most unhealthful, but exceedingly disagreeable. Radical changes there, or a new palace elsewhere, had become a matter of absolute necessity, and so incessant a builder as Francis I. might have been expected to undertake it at once. But although the idea of repairs and additions to the old fortress of the Louvre to render it fit for a royal residence, seems to have occurred to Francis very early in his reign, it is thought that no new building of importance was accomplished before his death.

The work of destruction however, began as early as 1527. When Charles V. made his famous visit to Paris, Francis renovated and redecorated apartments in the Louvre for his reception. His attention was then called to its ruinous condition and his determination to rebuild it, is said to have been taken at that time. Some idea of the solidity and strength of the old walls may be gained from the fact that it took five months and cost an enormous sum to destroy the old dungeon tower alone. The historic prison is said to have been much regretted by the populace, as its loss deprived them of the pleasure of seeing great lords confined there.

Just how much of the old pile was thrown down by Francis, it is impossible to say, but it is most probable that, from the beginning, only such portions were demolished, from time to time, as were necessary to make way for new building. There are accounts which tell us that Francis erected several rich edifices at the Louvre, but they are undoubtedly erroneous, as the earliest of the new work left us, is that of Lescot, for which the king did not sign the contract until 1546, one year before his death. This work therefore could hardly have been more than planned during the reign of Francis, and its actual execution belongs to that of Henry II. and even later.

As Lescot's commission was not only confirmed to him by Henry, but by Francis II., and Charles IX., his labours on the Louvre were to occupy him for about twenty-five years. The chief result is a wing which, not only set the style for the rest of the great palace, but which is still recognised as a model of the French Renaissance.

Francis' destruction of the old Louvre and Lescot's work began on the west side of the great court and continued along its south side; that parallel with the river. The wing called the wing of Lescot, therefore, extends from the "Pavillon de l'Horloge" to the "Pavillon des Arts," and bounds half of two sides of the present court of the Louvre. Only that on the west side, however, remains untouched.[1] Having arrived at these two pavilions, or rather at the angles of the old court now occupied by them, Lescot carried a wing back from the angle of his own structure, to what is now the "*Galerie d'Apollon*," and even built the first story of that gallery before his death in 1572. This amount of work does not appear excessive for a period of twenty-five years. It even seems very little if we remember that there is almost nothing else that is authentic from Lescot's hand. But it was creative work of

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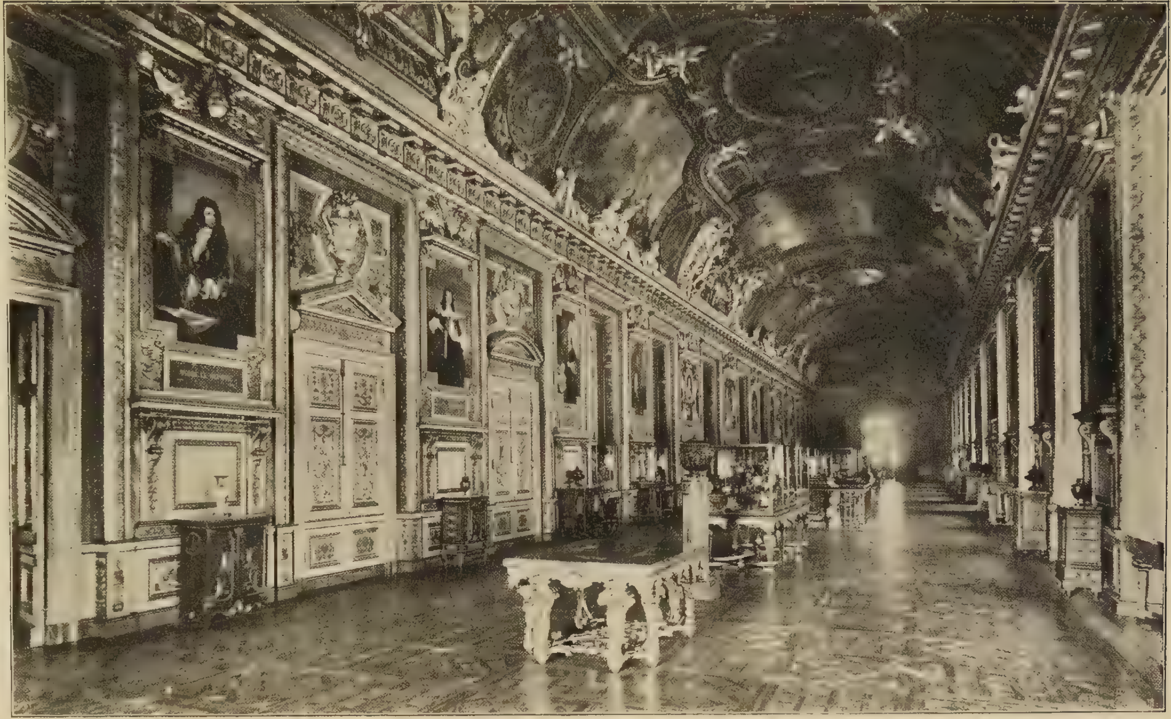
[1] An excellent plan of the Louvre is to be found in Baedeker which will prove of assistance in the outline which follows.

Louvre.

Galerie d'Apollon.



the first order, whose harmonious proportions and beauty of detail justify the great reputation which Lescot enjoyed in his own day and which has continued to our own. Lescot was a Frenchman but he was permeated with the classic spirit. His walls are given marked horizontal courses and divided by pilasters. His lower openings are round arched, and his upper ones crowned by pedimental caps. The decorative detail is also conceived in the classical spirit, yet no part of the work is a dead imitation of classical or Italian models. It remains therefore a French creation, instinct with life and genius, and, with its ordered arrangement and splendour of ornamentation, the latter sometimes considered superabundant, it is in every way a palace fit to be the residence of kings.

In this work of Lescot's also, we see the creation of a style shaped and planned for the town rather than for the country. The gables and turrets, the irregularity of arrangement which French architects were so loth to give up, and which are still often felt to be demanded for picturesqueness in country places, were here dispensed with, not only because they were contrary to the newly felt spirit of the classical style, but because a more dignified arrangement was thought to be required for the streets and squares of a city. That this propriety has long been felt is evidenced by the fact that, not only were the later wings of the Louvre modelled after the work of Lescot, but the streets of Paris are to-day lined with buildings of a similar character.

It is probable that it was designed for many years to allow the other two sides of the old court of the Louvre to remain with their old Gothic buildings, for after completing his two sides of the enclosure, not only did Lescot begin a wing running back from it along the river, but, after his death, Catherine de Medicis continued a long gallery as far as the "Pavillon de Lesdiguières," over which she built a sort of "portico" for herself and her children. This gallery Henry IV. continued to its junction with Catherine's Palace of the Tuileries, and added suitable upper stories. Henry is also said to have built a great salon over Lescot's basement back of his wing, which was burned in 1661, but which was replaced by Louis XIV. by the present "Galerie d'Appollon."

A marked feature of the gallery erected by Catherine is the "Porte Jean Goujon," one of the finest works of that great sculptor. It is found on the river front of her gallery, and bears the H placed there by Catherine to honour Henry II. Jean Goujon was associated for many years with Lescot, and the famous cariatides of the "Salle des Cariatides" are his work.

Louis XIII. and Richelieu desiring to add something to the Louvre, turned their attention to the old court, where two Renaissance wings were still

Louvre.

Port Jean Goujon.

confronted, either by the old Gothic work, or its ruin. As the extent of this court was not commensurate with their ideas of magnificence, its size was quadrupled, with the result that little more was accomplished during this reign than the completion of the west side of the now enormous court. The work of Louis XIII. continued and imitated the style of Lescot, but that of Louis XIV., whose long reign sufficed to complete the enclosure, became more mannered and classical.

Of the work of Louis XIV., the famous colonnade of the east front is the most important creation. It was designed by a physician, Claude Perrault, who had a love for architecture and who had evidently missed his true vocation. The severe beauty and marked dignity of his design commended itself at once to the pompous soul of the "Grande Monarque," and work on the Louvre was placed unreservedly in his hands. Very curiously the plan for the colonnade was found to be too long for the building, already erected back of it, but instead of modifying his design, Perrault added an entire new façade to the river front of the south wing, and a projecting mass at the end of the north wing to support it. These changes might be forgiven him out of consideration for his splendid colonnade, but not the heavy third story with which he replaced the original light attic of the court façade of Lescot's south wing.

Perrault's colonnade, notwithstanding criticism, is a really magnificent creation, but he was poorly remunerated by Louis XIV. and had the additional mortification of seeing the king's interest in his work decline. From 1670, the annual sum set apart for carrying out his further designs on the Louvre became less and less every year until in 1680 it ceased altogether. In a few years it was abandoned by royalty for the Tuileries and Versailles, and soon fell into a miserable condition of disrepair. Any portions that remained habitable were divided into small apartments and given to poor artists, poets, or other needy persons who had a claim upon the crown. Mean stalls were set up against the outside walls, and wretched little hovels in the grand court.

In this deplorable state the magnificent palace remained until Louis XV., to save it from irremediable decay, ordered the most urgent repairs to be made. Something was also done by Louis XVI. But little was accomplished however until 1803, when Napoleon I. gave the entire building into the hands of Percier and Fontaine, who were ordered to put it in thorough repair; to restore the sculpture, and finish some of the uncompleted designs of Perrault; work which occupied them uninterruptedly for nine years. The palace when completed is said to have been intended by Napoleon for a residence for vassal sovereigns when he should

Louvre.

Colonnade, East Front.

have added their kingdoms to his vast empire. Under the above architects, besides repairs, a beginning was made on the wing which was intended to connect the Louvre and the Tuileries on the north, as the gallery of Henry IV. had done on the south. Percier and Fontaine also erected the *Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel*, the chief ornament of the enormous court, which the two palaces were finally to enclose.

Louis XVIII. added one pavilion, that of "De Rohan," but it was Napoleon III. who finally completed the north wing and who made other extensive additions which give the palace the shape and much of the magnificence that we see to-day. Even during the reign of Napoleon I. the space between the Louvre and the Tuileries had been occupied by a number of narrow dirty streets, as well as the royal stables and a number of private hotels. A small square in front of the Tuileries, occupying the site of the *Jardin de Mademoiselle* (de Montpensier), originally named in honour of a *carrousel* or tournament given there by Louis XIV. in 1662, had been enlarged for the *Arc du Carrousel*, but the entire great space was not cleared until Napoleon III. took the work in hand. The inner wings of the long galleries were cleverly planned to conceal the difference in the axis of the two palaces, and the work was carried out with great magnificence.

Beyond the famous visit of Charles V., there is little mention of the court of Francis I. at the Louvre. During the reign of Henry II., there were occasional sojourns there, which undoubtedly became more frequent after Lescot's wing began to assume a habitable condition, yet even then the Tournelles remained the frequent Parisian residence of the French court.

A few of the scenes of Dumas' series of romances of the period of Henry II. occur at the Louvre, notably in "Les deux Diane" and "Le Page du Duc de Savoie." In them the writer, whether Dumas or another, (for Dumas confesses not to have even read some of the romances that bear his name), makes it appear that Queen Catherine and Diane de Poitiers were wont to hold their courts there, in opposite wings, at the same time. The Cardinal de Lorraine was the chief figure at the queen's receptions and the burly constable Anne de Montmorency paid his especial devotion to the all-powerful favourite, while the king looked on and balanced one faction against the other according to his fancy at the moment.

After the Guises had introduced their niece Marie Stuart at the court of France as the future wife of the dauphin, a most amusing scene at the Louvre, in which she was the chief figure, is recorded by Brantôme. That she was brilliant and clever goes without saying to those who know anything of this fascinating princess, but that at the age of thirteen she was a Latin scholar, and an advocate of advanced education for women, is hardly in accordance with the usual impressions given by historians of Marie Stuart. But Brantôme gravely tells us, that Marie Stuart was so learned in Latin at the age of thirteen or fourteen, that she declaimed before the court at the Louvre, an oration which she had composed in that tongue, in which she defended the opinion that an advanced education was beneficial to women.

After the death of Henry II. the young king Francis II. and his queen were conducted to the Louvre, when in the councils assembled at once, Francis announced that he desired to be assisted in governing, by his uncles the Guises. At this time also, we are told that Queen Catherine took her children and went to reside at the Louvre. She had always disliked the Hôtel des Tournelles, and the accident which had caused the death of the king her husband had occurred in a tournament in its courtyard. For that reason, as well as because of its unsanitary condition, Catherine soon procured an order for its entire destruction. The order was only partially accomplished at that time, but it was never again a royal residence, and for many years the court, when in Paris, was to be found at the Louvre. There Catherine plotted and intrigued and enjoyed her period of power. For the furtherance of her own ends she employed the most corrupt means to keep the kings, her sons, and their courts, entertained. Charles IX. occasionally revolted under the pressure she brought to bear, and the hypocritical Henry III. proved a weak and unsatisfactory tool, yet for thirty years she ruled the court of the Louvre.

Catherine resided for a number of years in the gallery which she built over Lescot's basement in the wing running back along the Seine, but court festivities were held in the Salle des Cariatides, the new and splendid hall which was the first work of Lescot on the old court. A fête given there by Catherine, in 1559, celebrated the inconsequent victory of the Catholic party at the battle of Jarnac. The royal forces had been led by Catherine's third son Henry, then the Duc d'Anjou, who is said to have been her favourite, and his victory gained an importance, not its own, by the death of the Prince de Condé. Its celebration was, therefore, unusually splendid. There were scenic representations, the chronicler neglects to say of what, and the *escadron volant* were present in full force.

In 1572, the concluding festivities which celebrated the marriage of Henry IV. with "La Reine Margot" were held at the Louvre, and six days later, on the twenty-fourth of August, the signal for the massacre of St. Bartholomew's day was given from one of the windows of the same palace. The intrigues which resulted in that day of passion and bloodshed had been gathering force for many months, and it is possible that it was hoped to make Henry of Navarre, after Coligny, the chief victim, but King Charles proved untractable. He had to be carefully worked upon, and until the last moment the course of events was uncertain, and the full extent of the horror was probably not foreseen.

Toward midnight, we are told, the queen-mother went down to the king followed by her son, Henry, and four other councillors. They were ostensibly urging the murder of Coligny, who had already been wounded in an attempt upon his life, but Charles had been attached to the staunch admiral and his mother found him more put out than ever and, after a struggle of an hour and a half, he still hesitated. "Then Catherine, fearing lest, if there were further delay, all would be discovered, said to him, 'Permit me and your brother, sir, to retire to some other part of the kingdom,' Charles rose from his seat. 'By God's death,' said he, 'since you think proper to kill the admiral, I consent; but all the Huguenots in Paris as well, in order that there remain not one to reproach me with.'"

The fullest accounts of the night at the Louvre are found in the memoirs of the young queen of Navarre. Shortly before the signal was given she went to the apartments of the queen-mother, when she tells us, "Being in the bed chamber of the queen, my mother, with my sister of Lorraine, who

I saw was very sad, the queen, my mother, after speaking to several persons, discovered my presence, and told me to go to my own apartment. As I was about to take my departure, my sister clasped me in her arms, weeping bitterly, and saying, 'My God, my sister do not go.' Her words frightened me extremely and when the queen, my mother, saw it, she was very angry, and forbade her to say anything more, but my sister exclaimed that they were sending me to sacrifice, for without doubt, if anything were discovered, revenge would be taken upon me. The queen, my mother, replied that it would please God that no harm should come to me, but that, whatever happened, I must go, for fear that something would be suspected and the plot ruined. I saw that they talked, scarcely heeding their own words. My mother commanded me hastily to seek my own bed. My sister, bathed in tears, bade me good night, without daring to say anything further, and I went, benumbed, chilled, and distracted, but without being able to imagine what I had to fear. When I reached my chamber I sank to my knees, praying God to guard me, but without knowing from what."

A few hours of restless and troubled sleep followed, which the young queen tells us was disturbed by the talk of her husband and his Huguenot followers; the latter urging upon Henry that he should demand satisfaction from the king for the attempt upon Coligny's life. "At daybreak," she continues, "the king, my husband, said he would go and play tennis whilst waiting until King Charles should be awake, when he had resolved to demand satisfaction of him." An hour afterward she was aroused by a loud thumping at her door, which, upon being opened, disclosed a wounded Huguenot pursued by four archers who all rushed into her room. The poor victim, M. de Tejan, or M. de Lerac, it matters little to us now which, flung himself upon her bed, thinking so to save himself. The queen, frightened, flung herself out of it, but the hunted man clung to her. Both were screaming and in that condition were found by the captain of the guard, M. de Nancy, who, the queen says, could not refrain from laughing at her plight, but who granted her the life of the fugitive, when she had him put to bed and his wounds dressed. "M. de Nancy," she continues, "related to me all that was happening, and assured me that the king, my husband, was in the king's chamber, and had sustained no harm. Then, making me wrap myself in a cloak, he conducted me to the apartment of my sister, Madame de Lorraine, where I arrived more dead than alive, and where, in the ante-chamber, the doors of which were all open, a gentleman named Bourse was run through by a pike, within a few paces of me, as he was flying from the archers that pursued him. I fell to one side fainting, thinking that this thrust was about to impale us both. When I had partly recovered, I entered the room in which my sister slept. Whilst I was there, M. de Moissans, first gentleman to the king, my husband, and Armagnac, his first valet de chambre, came in quest of me to beseech me to save their lives. I went and threw myself upon my knees before the king and the queen, my mother, and interceded with them for their lives which, at last, they granted me."

From the Venetian Ambassador we learn that towards four o'clock in the morning King Charles, the Queen-mother and the Duc d'Anjou, followed by several confidantes, had assembled secretly in that part of the Louvre which overlooked the river. Fears were expressed that, after the murder of Coligny, the Huguenots would turn upon the king, and wreak their vengeance upon all the royal family. Henry of Anjou was overcome with fright, and the prey to an inexpressible agony. Catherine tried vainly to calm his conscience, and repeated again and again that the plot was for the good of the state. But at the first shot, she, herself, was overtaken by a veritable vertigo, and, for a moment lost her courage. A messenger was hastily despatched to revoke the order, but it was too late.

Jean de Tavannes, who was on guard in the court of the Louvre at the time, writes in his memoirs, "that suddenly an unusual agitation was heard in the interior of the palace. The noise sounded from all sides, and from the depths of the dark corridors which were only dimly lighted by the lanterns of linen." The King of Navarre, and the Prince de Condé who, he says, were prisoners in a chamber near by, having recognised the son of the marshal (Tavannes), demanded to be allowed to join him. But Tavannes, fearing to compromise himself, refused. "I did not dare," he writes, "which has been well remembered to my prejudice since by Henry IV."

The two princes, the King of Navarre and the Prince de Condé, were conducted to the presence of King Charles. "My brother and my cousin," said he to them, "fear nothing, I had you brought here for your own safety." Then, turning to the captain of the guards, "Command the *gens d'armes* to leave the chamber." When the three were left alone, the king broached the subject of the abjuration, which he intended to impose. Henry of Navarre was too politic to make a long resistance, but Condé protested, upon which Charles threatened him with death if he refused obedience.

For many hours the courts and corridors of the Louvre were filled with flying Protestants and pursuing Catholics, and the cries and groans of victims were heard from every side. It is said that King Charles himself, found it amusing to fire from his window at his "poor devils of subjects," but his amusement of the hour became the horror of the remaining years of his life, of which there were only two, for remorse seems to have settled upon him like a blight.

It is said that great fright was caused at the Louvre eight days after the massacre, when, at night, a great flock of ravens settled upon the roofs, where they caused such a noise that the entire court was awakened and the ladies communicated their alarm to the already shaken king. Two hours later the king again leaped from his bed, and arousing his attendants sent them to ask if others heard the groans and cries of which the air was full, like that of the night of the massacre. The sounds were so distinct to many of the court that the king feared a new disorder, and sent his guards into the city to quell the disturbance. They found the streets perfectly quiet and peaceable, and the only noise, that in the air, which recurred for seven or eight nights at the same hour. In later years Henry IV. often spoke of this gruesome visitation, but only behind closed doors, and to his most intimate friends.

During the declining health of King Charles he lived alternately at Fontainebleau and the Louvre. The atmosphere of the court was gloomy in the extreme and the Louvre at that time was likened to a tomb. Ghosts constantly appeared to the terror-stricken king, and, though he had the marble statues washed every day, they obstinately remained to him, red as with blood.

Chapter XV

LOUVRE (CONTINUED)

THE people of Paris gave to Henry III. the following titles: “Henri, par la grace de sa mère, incert Roy de France et da Pologne imaginaire, Marguiller de S. Germaine d' l'Auxerrois et de toutes les Eglises de Paris, gendre de Colas, guerdonneur des collets de sa femme, et friseur de ses cheveux, mercier du palais, visiteur des estuves, gardier des Quatre Mendians, père conscript des Blancs, Battus, et protecteur des Caputtiers, and Concierge du Louvre.”[1] Such was the petty round of affairs to which this king devoted his whole soul, and his reign of fifteen years was largely spent at the Louvre.

Henry III. developed a perfect passion for small pets, and he and his queen purchased everywhere, monkeys, parrots and little dogs; sometimes, L'Estoile remarks, to the great discontent of former owners, who dared not refuse a sale to the king. Besides these small pets, there seems to have been a menagerie of larger animals at the Louvre, for the same writer tells us, "In January 1583, the king returned to the Louvre from the convent of Bons Hommes at Négron, and, because of a dream he had had there of being torn to pieces by such animals, he ordered killed all the lions, bulls, bears and large dogs in the menagerie of the Louvre."

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[1] L'Estoile.

King Henry was soon surrounded by that train of worthless favourites upon whom he bestowed all the time and attention not already devoted to his other petty cares. "It was in 1576," says L'Estoile, that the name *mignons* commenced to be often in the mouths of the people, to whom these parasites of the king were most odious, as much for their ways, their trifling and supercilious air, as for their rouge, and their immodest and effeminate dress, but also for the enormous gifts made them by the king. Henry himself was fond of masquerading in feminine attire, often wearing his doublet open at the throat, with a stiff ruff, or a necklace of pearls, and his *mignons* were great fops. They wore their hair well oiled, artificially curled and recurled, and surmounted by small hats of velvet, and their ruffs of linen were half a foot wide. Their exercises were gambling, blaspheming, dancing, quarrelling, and profligacy, and their chief care to follow the king everywhere, doing or saying nothing but what would please him."

One day in the court of the Louvre, Quelus, one of the *mignons* of the king, fell to quarrelling with one of the favourites of the Duc de Guise. The duel which resulted has become historic, partially through the magic of Dumas' pen, but also because of the bitterness of the contest. There were six men engaged, three on each side. Quelus, Maugiron and Livarrot fought against Entragues, Ribérac and Chourberg. The duel took place the day following the quarrel, near the old palace of Tournelles. Two fought at a time, and the contest only ceased when five men were stretched on the ground, and the sixth was forced to sheathe his sword for lack of an opponent.

Upon the occasions of the marriages of his favourites, Henry made great fêtes at the Louvre. That of the Duc de Joyeuse with the queen's sister, Marguerite de Lorraine, was begun with the ceremony of betrothal in the chamber of the queen. Then, after the marriage at St. Germain l'Auxerrois a few days later, there were fêtes and masques, combats *à pied* and *à cheval, tournons, musiques,* and *danses,* all taking place at the Louvre and costing at least one million two hundred thousand *écus.*

Of these fêtes, one was given by the queen which was finished by a ballet of Circe and her nymphs. It was the most beautiful, best arranged, and most dextrously executed of all the fêtes given. The day following, in the grand list or court of the Louvre, the king presented his combat of fourteen whites against fourteen yellows. It took place at eight o'clock in the evening with torches and flambeaux. The expense of this performance was enormous, but it was given with pompous magnificence. The gaieties were concluded the following day by a ballet *des chevaux*, executed by *chevaux d'Espagne*. For six or seven months these horses had been trained to advance and retire and perform their evolutions.

At the Louvre, in 1587, was given a magnificent banquet to celebrate the marriage of another of the king's favourites, the Duc d'Epernon. The crops had failed and the people were rioting for bread, the drawbridges of the palaces were raised and the streets of Paris were patrolled by the military, but a grand supper was served in the banqueting hall of the palace, and the bride wore the king's present, a necklace of one hundred large pearls, worth one hundred thousand crowns.

The last days of Henry III. at the Louvre were troublous ones. The growing popularity of the Duc de Guise showed a dangerous increase when that leader of the League suddenly appeared in Paris. The king was jealous and uneasy and the Duc de Guise already distrusted the king. Before venturing into the royal presence at the Louvre, therefore, the duke visited the queen-mother, then at her new Hôtel Soissons, requesting her intercession with her son. Catherine (at this time L'Estoile calls her *la vieille dame*) ordered her chair and conducted him herself to the Louvre, sending a courier ahead to tell Henry that Guise was coming. The king was visibly shaken when his enemy appeared, and those present detected a movement as though he would run him through. The abbé present repeated softly, "I will strike the shepherd, the flock shall be dispersed." The interview was short and angry, but Guise was allowed to depart. Henry undoubtedly recognized the fact that the duke's death at that time would arouse all Paris and that his own life would be the inevitable penalty. Even without provocation from the king, the strength of the Duc de Guise grew so rapidly that within a few days Henry felt obliged to fly from Paris. He took horse at the Tuileries where were the royal stables and, with a few followers, was soon on his way to Chartres and Blois. He was destined never to see Paris or the Louvre again.

In 1593, a remarkable assembly met at the Louvre. It was a sort of States-General, convened to consider who should govern France. During the four years which had elapsed since the assassination of Henry III. the country had been torn asunder by the conflicting claims of Henry of Navarre, who represented the Protestant faction, the Duc de Mayenne, the head of the house of Guise, and Philip II. of Spain. The two latter were ostensibly working together in the interest of the Catholic League, but each was intriguing for his own interest, the Duc de Mayenne desiring the crown for himself, and Philip II., for his daughter. The assembly at the Louvre dragged on for many weary months, much time being given to disputes as to matters of etiquette and precedence. During these altercations Henry IV., having made his abjuration at St. Denis, was crowned at Chartres, and by means of bribes and a proclamation of a general amnesty, procured an entrance into Paris, where he at once took possession of the Louvre.

Henry is said to have been so happy to have at length obtained possession of his capital that he could scarcely contain himself. When consulted as to matters of importance he replied at random, excusing himself by saying, "I am drunk, I do not know what to say or what I ought to do," and his followers were amazed to see him mimic like a buffoon the dignified and mournful salutation of the departing Spanish envoy, the Duc de Feria.

In January, 1599, Henry IV. assembled the Parliament at the Louvre to verify the Edict of Nantes. It was an exciting session, and when the assembly threatened to become unmanageable the king brought them to terms in a speech which was an unusually long one for him, a veritable harangue. He recounted his own service to the country; that he had re-established the nation that they had nearly ruined; that he himself had yielded his form of faith; that the Duc de Mayenne, the chief of the League, had recognised the necessity of an edict of toleration for both parties; and finally, as their king he demanded their obedience in registering a law which was necessary for the good of the entire kingdom.

After the siege and recapture of Amiens, a magnificent reception was given at the Louvre to the Spanish Embassy. Henry received his guests dressed in black and seated on a splendid dais in the grand salon, possibly the gallery replaced by the present Galerie d'Apollon. The king is said to have listened with as much patience as he could command, to the long harangue of the wordy Spaniards, to which he replied with his usual brevity. It happened that among those in attendance was the soldier whose strategy with the nuts had opened the gates of Amiens to the Spaniards. When he was pointed out to him, Henry approached the clever strategist laughing, "How many nuts, and how dearly did you sell them?" said he. The embarrassed soldier attempted to excuse himself, but the king interrupted him, saying, that he liked him well, and wished he had a kingdom full of such servants.

A frequent visitor to the Louvre during the early years of the reign of Henry IV. was his sister Catherine, one of the most attractive and admirable women of that period, or indeed of all the history of France. Her fine and well poised character strongly recalls that of her maternal grandmother, Marguerite of Navarre, and the patience and fortitude with which she bore the bitter disappointment of her marriage, is worthy of all praise as well as sympathetic commiseration. Both Catherine and her lover, the Comte de Soissons, long hoped for their union, but the king had other alliances in view for his sister, and she was finally united to the Duc de Bar. During her early visits to the Louvre, Catherine, who always remained a Protestant, had preaching and worship *à la Huguenot* conducted in her apartments, but later such services there were forbidden by the king.

When Gabrielle d'Estrées expressed a desire to be lodged at the Louvre, Henry gave her the grand apartments which had been occupied only by the queens of France, but the gratification of her whim is said not to have given her much pleasure, and Gabrielle usually resided when in Paris in her own palace.

In 1601, Henry IV. took up his residence at the Louvre with his new queen, Marie de Medicis, but before the year was out the atmosphere of that palace is described as a "hell upon earth." The queen, who was jealous, obstinate and turbulent, is said not to have confined her exhibitions of temper to the use of her tongue, but to have made free employ of her hands and nails upon her sovereign's face, dealing him also some heavy blows with her robust arm. The king, who loved peace and quietness in his domestic arrangements, turned to Henrietta d'Entraigues for relaxation, and even installed her at the Louvre, where she rapidly made a bad matter worse by flaunting her promise of marriage from the king, and finally threatened the legitimacy of the dauphin. She even plotted with Spain against the king, as that country was found willing to uphold the claims of her son.

It was from the Louvre on the thirteenth of May, 1610, that Marie de Medicis went to St. Denis for her coronation. The king, notwithstanding his aversion to that ceremony, was in his most jovial humour. When the queen returned crowned and in great state, he watched her arrival at the Louvre from a balcony, and amused himself by throwing drops of water upon her new splendour, and calling her "*Madame la Regente.*" She took it all rather badly, for in reality the king had shown little confidence in her. He had made her, in the event of his death, not regent, but member of a council of regency where she could do nothing, and where she would have no more voice than the other members.

The day following the coronation of Marie de Medicis, the dead body of Henry IV. was borne to the Louvre after his assassination in the streets of Paris. There it lay in state for several days in the Salle des Cariatides, while the queen, who was thought to receive the news of her widowhood with suspicious calmness, got herself proclaimed regent.

The infant royal, Louis XIII., was too young to be much moved, even had it been in his nature to feel deeply. He dined well the day of the assassination, and the next morning rose gaily, ate a good breakfast with a cup of white wine, then mounted his pretty little white hackney and went to the Parliament. There, in his childish voice, he ordered that his mother should be regent, to have care of his education, that she should even chastise him, but a few days later he qualified the last charge by adding, "At least not to strike me too hard."

Great shows were given at the Louvre to celebrate the marriage of Louis XIII. and Anne of Austria, when *Quadrilles d' Arioste,* whatever they may be, were given in the Place du Carrousel. According to descriptions, groups of mythological personages came rushing upon the scene in enormous triumphal cars drawn by monstrous beasts. Their mission was to proclaim to the revellers the astounding feats of *le puissant roy* Louis XIII.—yet to be accomplished, of course,—but which were clearly seen to be looming in the distance.

Mars announced him as the conquering hero of the future, and Minerva stepped in to declare that wisdom should guide him when he let loose his thunderbolts. Apollo appeared to tell of his love for the arts, and Diana to vaunt his prowess in the chase. But, when beautiful Venus drove in with her wicked little son in her sumptuous car and with doves and loves without number fluttering around her, she had a victory already achieved upon which to congratulate the youthful but potent monarch. Gracefully she waved her hand and kissed the rosy tips of her fingers as she bent toward the young queen, who, all radiant with delight, sat by the side of her young spouse, the latter probably the only person present bored by the scene. Following this display there were Fairy Ballets, which were participated in by the younger nobility, and theatrical representations for their elders.

After Vincent de Paul became the confessor of Louis XIII. he was accustomed to say mass every Friday in the chapel of the Louvre. He was popular and the king was devout, so his service was always well attended, and he rarely failed to receive the rich contributions he solicited for his numerous charities.

In 1635, at a *grand ballet de la reine* at the Louvre, a youthful beauty made her début who was destined to became famous during the early years of Louis XIV., the Princesse de Bourbon Condé. This charming young girl became the Duchesse de Longueville, and later the center of that intrigue which resulted in the ridiculous war of the Fronde. In her youth she had been possessed of a strong inclination for a religious life, and at her first ball at the Louvre she wore, underneath her gala attire, a prickly penitential garment of hair or some equally uncomfortable stuff, but her first glimpse of the world effectually cured her morbid desires, and she was soon, not only a belle at the court, but a welcome addition to the famous salon of the Hôtel Rambouillet.

At another ball at the Louvre during the reign of Louis XIII. Charles, Prince of Wales, afterwards Charles I. of England, first saw his future queen, Henrietta Maria, the young sister of the French king. The Prince of Wales was travelling incognito to Madrid to see there the Infanta Donna Maria, with whom his father was anxious to arrange a marriage for him. He was accompanied on his journey by the Duke of Buckingham, and the two had assumed the common names of Tom and Jack Smith. Chancing to be in Paris upon the occasion of a royal ball at the Louvre, they managed to secure advantageous seats as spectators, and there Charles saw the beautiful Henrietta dance, and, it is said, fell deeply in love with her. His presence was not disclosed at the time and his journey was continued to Spain, but when it became known Henrietta is said to have remarked, "The Prince of Wales need not have gone so far for a wife." She was familiar with his portrait and he was considered the most graceful prince in Europe.

After the death of Louis XIII., Anne of Austria abandoned the Louvre for the Palais Royal, then known as the Palais Cardinal, lately bequeathed by

Richelieu to the crown. The marriage fêtes of Louis XIV., however, were celebrated at the Louvre. There was an Italian opera for which artists came all the way from Italy by order of Mazarin, and the ballets between the acts were danced by the king and the queen and the ladies and gentlemen of the court. Molière and his troupe also performed before the bridal party.

After these marriage fêtes of the "Grande Monarque," we hear little further of the Louvre for many years. Louis himself did not like Paris, and the court began to reside almost constantly at his new palace at Versailles. For many years, therefore, the Louvre fell into neglect, and, as has already been said, well nigh went to ruin. It was never used again as a royal residence. Even after its restoration it has little history of importance. One ceremony only do we find recorded, that of the marriage of Napoleon with Marie Louise in the chapel of the Louvre in 1811, when the arrangements are said to have been of great magnificence.

That the Louvre escaped the destructions of the Revolution, was possibly because it had so long ceased to be associated with royalty; possibly because its condition was already desperate, though it was much as we see it to-day; and was left unharmed at the Commune, when the Tuileries was destroyed.

The Louvre has always been especially devoted to art and artists. It was Francis I. who commenced to gather its great collections, and the long gallery built by Henry IV. has always been a picture gallery. At an early day also, we read of certain artists being given apartments in the Louvre. The collections were largely added to by Colbert, the minister of Louis XIV. who purchased the greater part of the pictures and drawings of Charles I. of England, after the execution of that unfortunate monarch had brought his galleries under the auctioneer's hammer. But it was Napoleon I. who gave the collections of the Louvre even more than their present enormous proportions. Apparently the chief permanent result of his Italian campaigns was the vast number, and immense value of the works of art he was enabled to send home. To be sure, many of the most valuable had to be returned after his overthrow, yet the collections are still the largest in the world. These are mostly housed in the wings surrounding the great court and in the long gallery of Henry IV. The later gallery of Napoleon III. is given up to public offices.

Chapter XVI

TUILERIES

THE Louvre in which Francis I. entertained Charles V. was just inside the wall of Paris, and just outside of it was a manufactory of tiles with a neighbouring villa belonging to Nicolas de Neufville, *Secrétaire des Finances.* While the king was meditating the rebuilding of the old stronghold, his mother, Louise of Savoy, secured for herself this neighbouring domain and began the erection there of a suburban villa for herself. From the beginning it was called the Tuileries, from the early *tuile,* or tile manufactory. After the death of Louise of Savoy, the Tuileries became the appanage of different members of the royal family until Catherine de Medicis secured it and began the erection of a splendid new palace.

Even though Catherine had already humiliated Diane de Poitiers by depriving her of her much prized Chenonceaux, the latter still had Anet; and Anet was not only the *chef d'œuvre* of Philibert de l'Orme, but considered to be the most splendid achievement, thus far, of the French Renaissance.

Consequently when Catherine began her new palace, she too employed De l'Orme, and its design was intended greatly to surpass the beauties of his earlier work.

In May, 1564, the foundations of the first wing were laid, and the queen-mother took so active an interest in the work that certain of the earlier plans are attributed to her pencil. But for a variety of reasons, the adverse fates doomed the palace to failure from the very beginning. Among them was undoubtedly Catherine's difficulty in obtaining sufficient money to carry out her magnificent design. Certain taxes which she succeeded in persuading her sons Charles IX. and Henry III. to devote to the work, proved uncertain as to amount and were not always secured to her, and her private means never sufficed for her extravagant desires. As a consequence the building of the vast palace of the Tuileries lagged for years, and at the death of De l'Orme only one wing was completed.

The original ground plan consisted of a central group of buildings surrounding a great central court flanked to the north and south by four smaller courts. Of this, only the central pavilion with the wings attached to it was completed by De l'Orme. This, as left by him, was undoubtedly a creation of great beauty, but the changes and additions of later architects well nigh ruined it, even before its final destruction in 1871, and after his death no portion of De l'Orme's plan was ever fully carried out.

De l'Orme died in 1570, and Jean Bullant was at once called upon to carry on his work at the Tuileries. Lescot, De l'Orme, and Bullant, are the three great names of the early French Renaissance in architecture. Lescot's chief success was the Louvre, De l'Orme's, Anet, and Bullant's the famous chateau of Écouen built for the Constable, Anne de Montmorency, but now reduced to a mere shell. Bullant's work on the Tuileries was the two pavilions at the ends of De l'Orme's wing. In general design he probably followed the plan left by the earlier architect, but in matters of detail his work is said to have been stronger and bolder than De l'Orme's, whose style was refined and delicate, while Bullant's was robust and telling. The latter however was allowed to continue work on the Tuileries scarcely a year, for in 1571 Catherine suddenly abandoned the building of the vast palace, and set her architect to work on the Hôtel de la Reine, later known as the Hôtel Soissons.

Several reasons are advanced for Catherine's abandonment of her earlier scheme. Of these, lack of money was probably the most important, yet the immediate beginning of a new palace which required large sums, indicates that it was not the sole cause. The close vicinity of a pig market is sometimes mentioned as a great detriment to the Tuileries and might well have driven her away, but of more importance was the increasing turbulence of the country. We are approaching the period of the religious wars, and the Tuileries was outside the city wall, while the Hôtel Soissons was within. But whatever the cause for the abandonment of work upon it, there was nothing done at the Tuileries from 1571 until about 1620, when Louis XIII. again took the palace in hand.

The architect employed by the latter, Jean Androuet, erected blocks at either end beyond the pavilions of Bullant. These blocks were planned without reference to the earlier wings, and not only spoiled the unity of design thus far carried out, but dwarfed the earlier work. The most marked features of Androuet's wings were the huge columns which ran from basement to roof, while in the construction of De l'Orme and Bullant, double tiers of pilasters were employed one above the other to mark the stories. Androuet, however, must be credited with leaving the work of his predecessors unmolested, a grace not shown it by his successors, the two architects, Le Veau, and Dorbay, who were commissioned under Louis XIV. "to bring the discordant parts together."

The chief glory of De l'Orme's work appears to have been a spiral stairway of most unusual construction which ran up under a central cupola, and the destruction which was begun at once under Le Veau and Dorbay, commenced with that. It was demolished, because it was said to block up the view of the garden from the inner court, and its demolition necessitated the rebuilding of the cupola, which was changed into a kind of quadrangular dome.

The decoration of the façade was also much changed and a low attic added. Such alterations so effectually ruined the style of the earlier work, that of the design of De l'Orme, there was practically nothing left. The palace also, instead of surrounding a court, had ended in a single line of buildings, connected at one end with the Louvre by the gallery of Henry IV. The necessity of bringing the discordant blocks of the Tuileries into harmony with the commonplace style of this gallery, as well as with each other, is suggested as an excuse for some of the objectionable changes of Le Veau and Dorbay.

Some further changes and restorations are recorded under Napoleon I., Louis Philippe, and Napoleon III. Repairs were of course found to be necessary after the Revolution, which left disfiguring traces upon nearly all the royal palaces of France. But the mania for so-called restoration which, under Louis Philippe, blocked up at the Tuileries the open galleries overlooking the garden, has no such excuse. Napoleon III. united the Tuileries on the north to the Louvre, and then came the destructive fury of the Commune, which left the palace so nearly ruined that its walls have since been removed.

Notwithstanding that Catherine de Medicis so soon abandoned work on the Tuileries, there are frequent accounts of entertainments given by her there, which indicate her occasional residence in the wing built for her by De l'Orme. A fête given at the Tuileries by Catherine to celebrate the accession of Henry of Anjou to the throne of Poland, is described at length by both Brantôme and the Venetian Ambassador. The former devotes his pen to the especial adulation of the Princess Marguerite. Her dress was of Spanish velvet, of the red called carnation. It was heavily loaded with tinsel, and she wore a bonnet of the same material trimmed with plumes and precious stones. Ronsard was also present upon this occasion, and Brantôme turned to him remarking that the beautiful princess in her magnificent apparel resembled the goddess of dawn. An Aurora in Spanish velvet and plumes must have seemed a trifle incongruous, even to a courtier, or a poet, but Ronsard went home and composed a sonnet, which he later presented to Brantôme, in which Marguerite was likened to that diaphanously clothed goddess.

Brantôme also tells us of this fête, that, after supper a grand ballet was given in the great salon, which was superbly illuminated with flambeaux. Sixteen damsels, the loveliest and most accomplished of

Catherine's court, were posed in the niches of a huge structure covered with silver which occupied the centre of the salon. They represented the sixteen provinces of France. Entrancing music accompanied the spectacle, and presently the damsels descended from their niches, and formed themselves into little battalions and figures, dancing to the music of violins. For about an hour the ballet continued, and was concluded by the presentation by the fair dancers of plates of gold decorated with the fruits and flowers of the various provinces of France, to the king, the queen, the King of Poland, the King and Queen of Navarre, and other grandees of France and Poland.

In the description of this fête by the Venetian Ambassador we are told that the decorations were magnificent and provided at an enormous expense. At the entrance to the great salon, the queen-mother and her two sons were painted, each in character as follows: Catherine, with a helmet on her head, a shield, ornamented with a Gorgon, in her left hand, and a halberd in the other, was Pallas Gallicia. Below the picture was that title and above it were Latin verses in her praise. The Duc d'Anjou was called Apollo Gallicius, and painted with a lyre and a quiver of arrows. The King (Charles) was Jupiter Servator.

The gardens of the Tuileries, which stretched along the Seine for a considerable distance, were frequently used for open air fêtes, especially for fêtes in which river sports formed an important feature. A part of the marriage celebration of the Duc de Joyeuse was a banquet prepared by the Abbé of St. Germain de Près. It was to begin with a river pageant, and a splendid boat in the form of a triumphal chariot had been constructed for the king and the court. It was to be drawn by other boats, disguised as aquatic animals and fishes, and was to convey the royal party from the Louvre to St. Germain de Près. The embarkation was to be from the garden of the Tuileries, but the cumbrous machinery failed to work and after waiting there from four to seven o'clock a much disgusted king and court were obliged to go in coaches.

During the reigns of Henry IV. and Louis XIII. little interest was taken in the Tuileries, except as a sort of addition to the Louvre. Even under Louis XIV. we find a comparatively infrequent mention of it; for although the latter king practically abandoned the Louvre during the later years of his reign, and resided at the Tuileries when in Paris, he so disliked that city that he spent as little time there as was possible. Versailles was his passion, and there he established his court, giving Paris only occasional glimpses of royalty. The same was true of the succeeding courts of Louis XV. and Louis XVI., except during the minority of the former, when it was found desirable to keep the boy-king under the eye of the regent whose court was held at the Palais Royal.

It was at the Tuileries, therefore, that much of the boyhood of Louis XV. was spent. There the timid and suspicious child of seven was coaxed into pronouncing the necessary "yes" which sealed his betrothal with his cousin, the Infanta of Spain, who was later returned with thanks to her father Philip V. Louis XV. at seven did not want to be married at all, but he was scarcely more gracious at sixteen when by a court intrigue he was wedded to Marie Leckzinska.

A very brilliant scene is recorded at the Tuileries shortly before the coronation of Louis XV. The young king had suffered from a slight illness which the fears of the nation had magnified into danger to his life, consequently the popular joy at his recovery ran high, and a grand fête to celebrate the event was given at the Tuileries. The stately Duc de Villeroi acted as master of ceremonies, and made a very splendid appearance in his powdered wig, embroidered velvet coat, and satin vest. He wore also some fine old lace and a diamond star in his hat. The young king was dressed for the occasion in embroidered blue velvet, and his white plumed hat above his golden curls, with his jewels and crosses, which made a brilliant show, completed a rare picture of boyish beauty. He wore the famous "Sancy" diamond in his hat.

Louis XV. was only thirteen at this time, and his shyness, always excessive during his youth, rendered him quite unmanageable. It was with difficulty that he could be prevailed upon even to show himself to the people who thronged every approach to the palace, hoping for a glimpse of his royal person.

The glare of the illuminations and the noise of the fireworks frightened him, and after being coaxed out upon the balcony by the duke he finally broke away and ran to hide behind a chair in a corner, where they were obliged to allow him to remain during the remainder of the festivities. A part of the show was the illuminated boats which were arranged on either side of the river. Then there were artificial swans and other aquatic birds, which were made to float on the surface, and, as a crowning delight for the populace, several whales, which were launched from behind sheds, were made to spout fire as they entered the water.

After the coronation of Louis XV. there is little of marked historical interest at the Tuileries until we come to the period of the Revolution. Then, and for nearly one hundred years, many of the most thrilling events and dramatic scenes in the history of France were to occur at the Tuileries.

After the attacks on Versailles of October fourth and fifth 1789, the mob carried the king and the queen with such members of the court as had not already fled from France, back with it to Paris, where for three years the Tuileries was made the prison of the royal victims. The palace had been so long disused that it was found almost bare of furniture, but within a few days a few of the most necessary comforts of life were brought in from Versailles.

On the twentieth of June, 1792, the anniversary of the "tennis court" oath at Versailles, a rabble bent upon a celebration forced its way into the royal apartments at the Tuileries. There they placed the shaken and irresolute king upon a table, where they insulted and menaced him, and finally presented him with a *bonnet rouge* which he was weak enough to allow them to place upon his head. Napoleon, then a young officer, is said to have been a spectator from the terrace, of this disgraceful scene. "How came they to allow this *canaille* to enter?" he said. "They should have blown four or five hundred of them into the air, and the rest would have taken to their heels."

In August following came that attack on the Tuileries which ended in its sack, the murder of the Princesse de Lamballe, and the removal of the royal family to the Temple. Then the so-called National Convention took possession of the theatre of the Tuileries, and, in session there, declared royalty abolished in France. On the twentieth of January, 1793, Louis XVI. was tried for his life before this assembly and condemned to death the following day. In October of the same year Marie Antoinette was brought before this same self-appointed tribunal. Twenty years before she had appeared as a bride, in this theatre. Then she had been young, gay, and beautiful, and welcomed by the acclamations of the people. Now she was dressed in a faded dress of common black stuff, and, although still young, her eyes were dimmed with grief, and her hair blanched by terror. She had undoubtedly lived heedlessly, but the debt was not all hers, and she paid it with a dignity worthy of the daughter of kings. Widowed and deprived of the support of any kindly friend, she yet faced her accusers with a majesty that rendered their task a difficult one, but her condemnation to the ignominy of a public death was soon accomplished, and within a few days Marie Antoinette followed her husband to the guillotine in the Place de la Concorde.

During the "Reign of Terror," and the succeeding years of French efforts at self-government, the palace of the Tuileries was open to everybody and was soon in a shocking state of disrepair; holes in its walls were patched up with boards, and frequent inscriptions announced that royalty was abolished in France and never should be re-established. This was its condition in January, 1800, when Napoleon, as First Consul, took possession. His installation in the palace of kings was made the occasion of a military pageant, but care was taken that nothing should suggest royalty. Repairs and refurnishing were, of course, absolutely necessary, and were begun immediately; but these, also, were carried on so quietly as to excite no comment.

Here Josephine at once, but in a modest way, set up her court, which was soon to rival, in briliancy if not in polish, those of the "old régime." The social gaieties led by her and her ladies contributed not a little to the glory of the stirring early days of the First Empire. The empress was possessed of marked social graces and was clever enough to surround herself with brilliant women, and, if the followers of the emperor, who were frequently more accustomed to the battlefield than to a drawing room, occasionally entered her presence in anything but courtly attire, it was Napoleon who showed annoyance, not she. With the growing power and ambition of the emperor, the rules of the court became more rigid and its habitués gradually assumed a degree of courtly polish.

In the popular demonstrations and rejoicings which followed Napoleon's great victories, when the city was always *en fête,* the Tuileries was made the centre of festivities and was frequently illuminated until it resembled a fairy palace. At these fêtes the gardens were also given up to revelry. The fleur de lys at the Tuileries were very early replaced by the bees with which Napoleon sought to link his dynasty with that of the Merovingian kings, and the graceful and delicate decorations of the period of Louis *quinze* speedily gave way before the heavier elegance of that of the First Empire. Also instead of the elaborate and bouffant lines of the costumes of Watteau and Madame de Pompadour, the courts and salons of the Tuileries were filled with ladies in the clinging and scanty robes admired by the great emperor and adopted by his empress.

For nine years Josephine was the gracious mistress of the Tuileries. Then on the fifteenth of December, 1809, a family council assembled there, attended by the various dignitaries who came to assist at the ceremonies of her divorce, and with her repudiation the brilliancy of the court of the First Empire may be said to have ended. Marie Louise was timid, stiff, and stupid, and utterly unable to lead, or even to follow, the clever *dames du palais* who had surrounded her predecessor. Napoleon, also, dared not make a confidante of her as he had of Josephine; first because there was little sympathy between them, and second because she would probably have reported his waning fortunes to the court of Austria.

The emperor was much attached to the little sons of his brother Louis and Hortense Beauharnais, and his farewell to little Louis, who afterwards became Napoleon III., was later to be recalled, not only as a touching incident, but because of the emperor's pre-vision of the child's future career. It was the day before Napoleon's departure for the campaign of Waterloo. He was closeted in his cabinet at the Tuileries with Marshal Soult, when the little Louis, who had escaped from his mother, contrived to gain admission. "As soon as the boy saw the evidences of emotion in the emperor's face, he ran up to him, and laying his head in his lap sobbed out 'Our governess says you are going to the wars,—don't go—don't go, Uncle.' 'And why not, Louis? I shall soon come back!' 'Oh, Uncle, those wicked allies will kill you! Let me go with you.' The emperor took the boy on his knee and kissed him. Then turning to Soult who was moved by the little scene, he said, 'Here, Marshal, kiss him; he will have a tender heart and a lofty spirit; he is perhaps the hope of my race.' "[1]

The next tenant of the Tuileries was Louis XVIII., and as both he and his brother who succeeded him as Charles X. were widowed before their accession, their courts were presided over by the Duchesse d'Angoulême, the wife of the eldest son of Charles. It will be remembered that the Duc d'Angoulême had married his cousin, Marie Thérèse, (the daughter of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette), the only one of that unfortunate family who had survived the horrors of the Revolution. She had first been left in the Temple, then exchanged with Austria for Lafayette, and the years of the empire had been spent by her in that country. It is said that she was able to forgive but not forget the sufferings of her parents and her youth, and her pale, sad face could be but a continual reproach to her own countrymen. She was also deeply religious, and, though much should not have been expected of her, the court at which she presided was a sad contrast to that of the graceful Josephine. The wife of the Duc de Berri, the second son of Charles X., Marie Caroline of Naples, was young and pretty, and doubtless furnished all the life and gaiety there was at the stiff and solemn court. The later history of the Duchesse de Berri, however, leads one to doubt whether her presence could have added to it much of dignity. One of the Italian Bourbons, she, like her sister, Queen Christina of Spain, made her name notorious, and by her indiscretions helped to lose the French throne for her son, the Duc de Bordeaux.

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[1] E. W. Latimer.

The accession of Louis Philippe introduced another commonplace mistress to the Tuileries. Marie Amélie had many good qualities; she was charitable and pure-minded, and an admirable mother to her family of boys; but, as queen, she did not even inspire respect. Her reign lasted eighteen years, being terminated by the Revolution of 1848.

After several days of insurrections, we are told that several gentlemen made their way into the Tuileries just as the royal family were sitting down to breakfast. Louis Philippe was implored to abdicate and spare further bloodshed. Without a word, he drew pen and paper towards him and wrote his abdication. Then he embraced his grandson, the little Comte de Paris, saying to those about him, "This child is your king." At the same time there came through the main entrance of the palace a party of dragoons leading their horses down the marble steps into the garden. The royal family followed the king to the Place de la Concorde where cabs were found in which they drove away while a crowd poured into the Tuileries from the Place du Carrousel.

During the first half hour many valuables and much money disappeared, and soon the palace gardens were white with papers, many of great historical value. A piece of pink gauze, the property, probably, of some maid of honour, streamed from one of the windows in the roof and fluttered across the whole building. The crowd, a good humoured one, tossed livery coats, and furniture, and appropriated royal pomade and powder, and even royal toothbrushes. Guards, who saved much of destruction and robbery, were soon stationed in every room, but inspection and open disrespect was everywhere permitted. The "Marseillaise" was played and rough dancing indulged in, while a gamin disported himself in one of poor Queen Amélie's state head-dresses surmounted by a long-tailed bird of paradise.

At a ball given on New Year's day 1853, by Napoleon III., the young and beautiful Mademoiselle de Montijo was rudely treated by the wife of a cabinet minister. Seeing the troubled face of the young Spanish lady with whom he was already deeply in love, the emperor inquired the cause, and when he knew it, he said quietly: "To-morrow no one will dare to insult you again," and the following day the Duc de Morny waited upon Madame de Montijo with a letter from the emperor formally requesting her daughter's hand.

The twenty-ninth of January the civil ceremonies of the marriage were celebrated at the Tuileries. The bride drove thither from the Élysée Palace, which had been placed at her disposal, and was received by the Grand Chamberlain and other court dignitaries, who conducted her to the first salon. There she was received by Prince Napoleon and his sister, the Princess Matilde, who introduced her into the salon where the emperor, with his uncle, King Jerome, stood ready to receive her. The emperor was surrounded by a glittering throng of cardinals, marshals, admirals, and great officers of State. Thence, at nine o'clock, she was led by the emperor to the "Salle des Maréchaux" and seated beside him on a raised throne. The marriage contract was then read and signed by the bride and bridegroom and by all the princes and princesses present.

At the conclusion of the civil marriage the imperial pair with the wedding guests passed into the theatre, where a cantata, which had been composed by Auber especially for the occasion, was sung. The empress, robed in lace and glittering with jewels, seemed to realise, says an eye witness, the picture presented of her by the composer's words:

[1] *"Espagne bien aimée,*
Où la ciel est vermeil,
C'est toi qui l'as formée
D'un rayon de soleil."

The costume of the empress was probably the same worn the following day for the religious ceremony at Notre Dame, of Alençon point lace.

In July 1870, a cabinet council was held at the Tuileries to which the empress was admitted, as the state of the emperor's health was such that it was feared she might soon be called upon to become regent for her son. The matter under discussion was the possible rupture with Germany. The empress and Marshal le Bœuf were vehement for war, and war was declared within a few days.

[1] "Ah, beautiful Spain,
With thy skies ever bright,
Thou hast formed her for us
From a ray of sunlight."

With the rapid successes of the German arms, the empire tottered to its fall. The empress became frightened for her life, fearing that a Parisian mob might again invade the Tuileries and wreak their vengeance for the emperor's defeats upon her. Her life during those last days at the Tuileries is described as piteous and strange. "She was up every morning and heard mass. Her dress was black cashmere with a white linen collar and cuffs. All day long she was the victim of every person who claimed an audience, all talking, gesticulating, begging. When a false rumour arrived of a French success she flew down to the guard room, where the soldiers off duty were lounging in their beds, waving the telegram over her head. One day no servant could be found to bring her breakfast, and her wardrobe was found pillaged to such an extent that no riding habit was left her when she desired to go forth on horseback to put herself at the head of troops." Alarming rumours began to come in, and, finding it impossible to reach the street directly from the Tuileries, the empress, with one lady in waiting, made her way through the long gallery of the Louvre, and gained the entrance to that palace opposite the church of St. Germaine l'Auxerrois. There they secured a cab and succeeded in driving unrecognised to the home of an American dentist, Dr. Evans, through whose assistance escape was made to England. This occurred in September 1870.

Tuileries.

After the Commune.

On the sixteenth of May, 1871, the day of the destruction of the column in the Place Vendôme, a great patriotic fête was given in the palace of the Tuileries which was thronged. But the Commune was beginning to lose its head, moderate members of the council were sending in their resignations: the army of Versailles was fairly within the walls, and Communist leaders were giving way to excess and madness. If they could not rule they could destroy, and their work of destruction began with the Tuileries. Combustibles steeped in petroleum and barrels of gunpowder were placed in various rooms. On the twenty-second and twenty-third of May it was set on fire in a number of places, and the conflagration soon assumed such terrible proportions that after the troops from Versailles gained possession it was found useless to attempt to extinguish it. The whole west side of the palace was soon reduced to a heap of ruins. That much was left which might have been restored, the accompanying picture of the Tuileries after the Commune, bears witness. But through lack of interest or lack of energy the remains of the historic monument were finally razed to the ground and the site laid out in gardens.

Chapter XVII

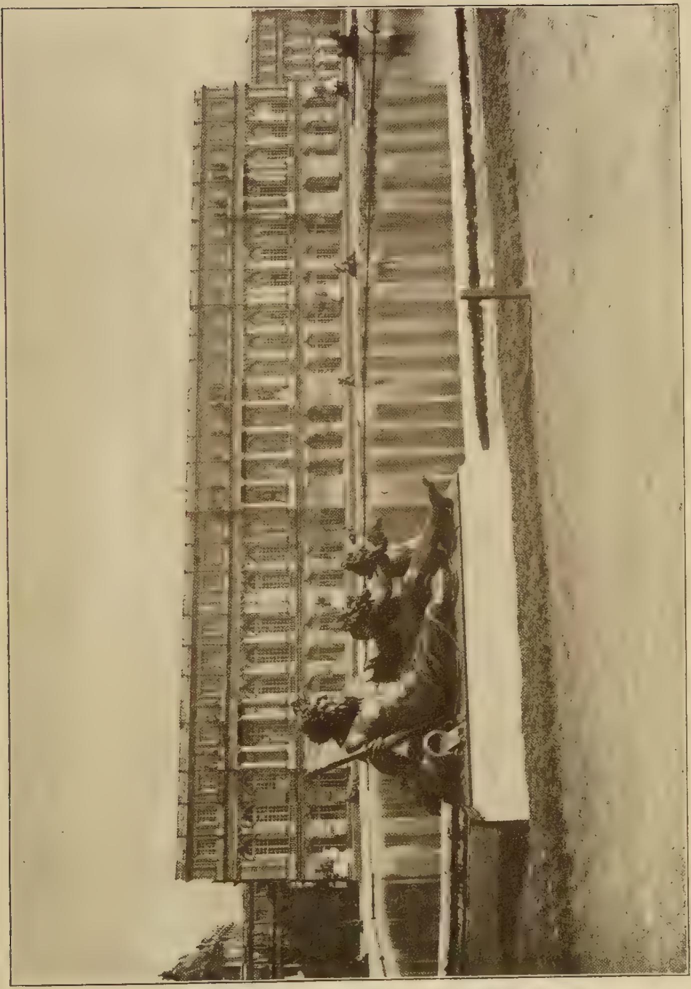
VERSAILLES

THE royal chateau at Versailles was not founded by Louis XIV., but, as it stands to-day, it is practically his creation, and no single monument in France better expresses that king and his reign. Louis XIV. put into Versailles not only his passionate love of self-glorification, but the lives of thousands of his subjects and one thousand million of francs (two hundred millions of dollars); sacrifices which might have spared France her Revolution; and all without producing an architectural monument of any value whatever except size. Hamerton writes, "Louis XIV. imagined the last immensity of the French Renaissance, and in Versailles the demon of the colossal got itself satisfied."

This enormous and meaningless pile sheltered a life which was planned and lived on the same stupendous scale. The history of Versailles recalls the pomps and pageants, the vanities and intrigues, of the long reign of its builder; the sumptuous but often disgraceful orgies of his successor; and that fearful punishment which overtook those whose

Versailles.

Garden Façade.



chief offence was that they came after hundreds of years of misrule, and had not the strength to stem the tide which had gained an irresistible momentum during the reign of Louis XIV.

With such memories and such splendour, Versailles must always prove a monument of absorbing interest, even though architecturally it merits little attention. The first view, as one approaches it from the town, discloses two classical pavilions and a chapel whose outlines rise above interminable stretches of red brick walls of two stories with a mansard roof. There is not even a grand entrance. The only portion of the immense pile which produces any architectural effect is the central projecting block of the garden façade. But even this is monotonous and unpleasing in composition, detail and colour. It is flanked by wings of similar style, which stretch away endlessly in the rear, in all something over fourteen hundred feet.

Some portions of the central part of the building date from Louis XIII., who, in 1627, built here a moated castle on the site of a windmill in which he had once taken shelter for the night. These buildings were piously respected by Louis XIV. when he began his immense chateau in 1661, but the general aspect of the vast palace is due to the latter king and his architects Le Veau, and J. H. Mansart. The latter was a nephew of the inventor of the style of roof which bears his name, and builder of the wing of Gaston d'Orléans at Blois. The very dulness of the situation at Versailles seems to have been an added attraction to the prosaic mind of Louis XIV., and the enormous cost of life and money to supply it with water did not in the least lessen its desirability in the mind of such an absolute ruler.

Externally, the gardens serve as a much greater attraction at Versailles than the chateau itself, but these, also, were made by Le Nôtre to express the pompous soul of Louis XIV. Nothing more artificial could be imagined. There is no rich luxuriant growth, and there are no natural tangles. Everything seems to grow in stately processions. The long vistas which stretch away in every direction all lead back to the enormous, but monotonous pile where the "demon of the colossal," not only "got itself satisfied," but wrought its own ruin and the ruin of France.

In its interior, Versailles is simply an interminable succession of halls, salons, stairways, and suites of smaller apartments. It has sheltered as many as ten thousand persons at one time, and many of its halls are so long that it is fatiguing even to contemplate their extent. Some of the private apartments have been the most sumptuous, if not the most beautiful, ever produced in France, but they were largely stripped of their furnishings at the Revolution when everything that could be carried

Versailles.

Galerie des Glaces.

away was either destroyed or sold. For a few of the apartments these have been partially recovered, but to-day the most of the salons and galleries are bare of furnishings, and are hung with historical paintings chiefly illustrating the history of France. Some few of these pictures possess artistic value, but the larger portion have little interest except in the history they recall. Like the palace itself, these hundreds of pictures also seem interminable and, even to one to whom they represent a vital interest, must prove intensely fatiguing. Therefore, notwithstanding its interest and splendour, Versailles is to-day the most tiresome royal palace in Europe.

Versailles became the definite residence of the court in 1682, so to remain until the mob of 1789 carried Louis XVI. back to Paris. Its more important apartments are the "Galerie des Glaces," the Theatre and the Chapel. The Galerie des Glaces occupies the front of the garden façade. It is two hundred and forty feet long, and is a sort of enclosed terrace, the arches opposite the windows being filled with mirrors which reflect the views of the garden and give the effect of a hall of glass. It is magnificent with marble and bronze, and its decorative paintings by Charles Le Brun celebrate the achievements of Louis XIV. The Theatre was begun by Jacques Ange Gabriel (the builder of La Petite Trianon), under Louis XV., for Madame de Pompadour, and finished for Madame du Barry.

It was inaugurated upon the occasion of the marriage of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette.

The chapel is the third to be erected in the chateau; the first was in the early building erected by Louis XIII., and the second has been turned into salons, of which the "Salon d'Hercule" is one. This second chapel was used during the most of the reign of Louis XIV., and was the scene of many of the marriages arranged by him, the "Grande Monarque" having displayed a most praiseworthy diligence in getting fine matches for his relations and children, legitimate and otherwise. Here the Prince de Conti was married to Mademoiselle de Blois, the daughter of Madame de la Vallière. Here the Duc de Chartres, afterwards the Régent d'Orléans, was forced to marry a daughter of Madame de Montespan, and here Louis XIV. himself was married to Madame de Maintenon. The latter ceremony occurred in the dead of night, some time during 1685 or 1686. There is no known date, and there is no record, official or otherwise, but the marriage has never been doubted.

The present chapel is an imposing classical construction, and was the last work of J. H. Mansart. It was completed some few years before the death of Louis XIV., and immediately became the scene of the daily mass, one of the most important functions of the court during the later years of the king. Preaching became fashionable also, and many of the popular pulpit orators of the day came here prepared to temper their discourses to royal ears. One of them so far forgot himself, upon one occasion, as to thunder forth "All men must die," then, as he noticed the fingers of the king nervously tapping his stick, and remembered that the mention of death was obnoxious to him, he stumbled out, *"Oui, Sire, mais presque tous."*

Under Louis XIV., the "Salon de Mars" was used as a ball room when it was decorated with some of the works of Titian and Veronese which are now in the Louvre. The "Salon d'Apollon" was formerly the throne room. The "Salle du Conseil" was used by Louis XIV. for the transaction of business with his ministers, and in this room is still preserved the clock which was stopped at his death and never allowed to run again. It was here, also, that M. de Brézé announced to Louis XVI. that the Deputies had come together at Versailles at the will of the people, and would only depart at the point of the bayonet.

Of all the suites of apartments at Versailles those of Louis XIV. were probably the most splendid, and culminated in his magnificent bed chamber, now filled, as nearly as possible, with its original furnishings. The antechamber where the courtiers awaited *le grand lever du roi,* is called the "Salle d'l'Œil de Bœuf" from its oval skylight. From here, at a given signal, they entered the bed chamber of the king, but beyond the balustrade that surrounded the bed no one advanced without especial permission or invitation. "When a king of France died the first gentleman entered the balcony overlooking the Marble Court, and there cried three times *'Le Roi est mort;'* then breaking his wand of office and taking a fresh one, *'Vive le Roi.'* "

The small apartments, now known as the apartments of Marie Antoinette, were earlier those of Marie Leckzinska. It was there that the latter died, and it was from there that Marie Antoinette made her escape that terrible sixth of October, 1789. There are also the special apartments of the various princes and princesses of the blood, of Madame de Montespan, Madame de Maintenon, Madame de Pompadour, and of innumerable other personages, important or otherwise, which may be traced by those who have the time and strength to devote to it. These will be materially assisted by Hare's excellent outline and Baedeker's map, but even a bare enumeration of them would prove much too tiresome to be undertaken here.

For the gossip of the court of Versailles during the reign of Louis XIV., one should read the famous letters of Madame de Sévigné. In them the indefatigable *raconteuse* informed her daughter, Madame de Grignan, whose marriage had taken her away from the French capital, not only of everything of importance that happened in that fascinating centre, but of even the smallest occurrence that stirred the life of the pompous court at Versailles. There are very frequent accounts of the quarrels of the favourites, and the dulness of a court ball, when the king led out the queen, is remarked upon.

"Hoca" was the great gambling game at Versailles, and Madame de Sévigné tells of one morning when the queen remained away from mass to play it when her losses were twenty thousand crowns. The king remarked, "Let us calculate, Madame. How much is this a year?" After the campaign of 1676 in Holland, life at Versailles was given up to amusement and gambling, and Madame de Grignan was told of comedies, concerts, balls, and suppers on the water, though where a sufficiently large expanse of water was found for boating in the vicinity of Versailles, we are left to wonder. A new game, called *reversis*, was introduced, and became so popular that it was played every day in the king's apartment. The king and Madame de Montespan kept a bank at one table, and the queen with Madame de Soubise at another. The latter continued the play while the queen retired to prayers, and the game was so high as to win or lose every day two or three thousand *louis d'ors*.

In 1714, the king's health began to fail, but Louis XIV. was so unwilling to recognize the approach of a greater power than his own that he refused to acknowledge any symptoms of disease until his faculties absolutely failed him. The day he took to his bed was that of the fête of St. Louis, and a part of the ceremony was the ancient custom of "touching for the king's evil." This had usually been performed in the corridor leading from the royal apartments to the chapel, where the king touched the sufferers as he went to mass. Upon this occasion an unusually large number had been brought from all parts of France, and the disappointment was intense when it was found that the king was unable to leave his bed. The joy, therefore, was proportionately great when it was announced that the ceremony would take place in his bed chamber, and in all the history of Versailles, there can have been no stranger scene than that which followed. The splendid room was much as we see it to-day. In the magnificent bed was the dying king propped into a sitting posture; his weak hands upheld on either side as his strength failed him, touching one after another the suffering creatures of all degrees and conditions who trooped through the room. Even so the task proved too great for the dying monarch, and was not completed when he fell back exhausted, remaining so long unconscious that he was reported dead, and before he was revived courtiers had already begun to make their way into the apartments of the Duc d'Orléans, who was to be Regent.

A few days later, when his death actually occurred, Louis XIV. was deserted by all but a few servants who are said to have remained to strip the body of valuables. Even Madame de Maintenon did not, perhaps dared not, remain to receive his last breath, for the death of Louis XIV. was hailed with such an outburst of popular joy that guards were considered necessary to protect her as she retired to St. Cyr, and the body of the king was hurried to St. Denis by way of fields and by-paths to avoid insult.

As the winter following the marriage of Louis XV. was one of unusual severity in Paris, the new queen, Marie Leckzinska, introduced at Versailles the Polish pastime of sleighing, and the park soon became gay with the sledges of courtiers who delighted in the novel sport. The queen first appeared in a sledge formed like a sea shell. It was supported by Tritons, and rose-crowned Cupids were grouped around it. Two fiery little steeds were attached by embroidered crimson leather harness, from which hung innumerable tinkling silver bells.

For many years the Duc de Choiseul was the power behind the throne. He was able and unscrupulous and kept his grasp of affairs by means of his strong personality. The king feared rather than liked him, but Louis was indolent and only escaped from the entire control of his powerful minister when the installation of Madame de Pompadour at Versailles, in 1744, gave him two masters instead of one.

Before that date the court had been a dull place, for the duke had not found it necessary to enliven the stupid king in order to rule him, but the introduction of a clever and witty woman soon changed the aspect of life at Versailles. From there the Duchesse de Pompadour extended her patronage to the leading artists and men of letters of her day. Her receptions, of which the most popular were those held *à la toilette,* soon became the most important functions at Versailles. There she received the king and his ministers and applicants for her favour in all matters of public or private business, as well as the most brilliant men and women of her period, Voltaire, Rousseau, Boucher, Watteau, and others. The *toilette* of Madame de Pompadour was the centre of court intrigues, and those intrigues practically governed France.

Louis XV. always disliked Voltaire, but upon one occasion, when a fête was given at Versailles to celebrate certain successes of French arms, that brilliant philosopher was asked to furnish an appropriate piece. The result was the "Temple de la Gloire." In the opening scene, Trajan (Louis XV.) was to be seen giving peace to Europe, the Temple of Glory afterwards opening to receive him. As a special favour, Voltaire obtained permission to be present at its first presentation when he committed a breach of etiquette which nearly cost him even the small favour with which the king already regarded him. It was contrary to all rules to approach the august presence unless especially invited to do so, but the author advanced and demanded, "Is Trajan satisfied?" The king drew himself up with a look of astonishment and indignation which dismayed even the dauntless Voltaire who was only forgiven through the friendly intercession of Madame de Pompadour.

That the influence of the latter was all-powerful was again evidenced in the dismissal at one time of a Minister of the Navy. France possessed nothing in the way of ships or shipping that could by any stretch of the imagination merit the name of Navy, but she had a minister of that bureau, and he became obnoxious to Madame de Pompadour. It was therefore one day suggested to his majesty that he looked fatigued, and that the royal complexion appeared to be fading, undoubtedly because of weariness produced by the inaptitude for business of the objectionable minister. Nothing further need be said of the ability of Louis XV. as a ruler, or of the methods of the unscrupulous favourite.

In 1762, Madame de Pompadour died at Versailles. When she felt the approach of the illness that was to cause her death, she retired to her private estate of Choisy, feeling that when no longer able to entertain the king, he would find her presence under the roof of Versailles wearisome and a burden. But Louis had more heart than she thought, and caused her to be brought back and tenderly cared for at Versailles while she lived. It is probable also that he did not make the heartless remark with which he is often credited, "Madame has unpleasant weather for her journey," said to have been made as the king, from a balcony, watched her funeral pass out of the gates of Versailles.

Within the next four years the deaths of the dauphin, the dauphiness, and the queen occurred at Versailles, and its atmosphere became melancholy in the extreme. The king, touched by his successive bereavements, is said to have surrounded the last illness of his long-neglected queen with such assiduous attentions, that she, little accustomed to his solicitude, knew not how to show her gratitude. The death of the queen left the four remaining daughters of the king nominally mistresses of Versailles. These lovely but rather dull princesses are best known to us after the accession of Louis XVI. as Mesdames, the aunts of the king. Then they were domiciled in "La Grande Trianon," the classical chateau built by Louis XIV. in the edge of the Park of Versailles for Madame de Maintenon.

During the later years of Louis XV. the court at Versailles was divided between the friends of Madame du Barry and the young dauphiness, Marie Antoinette. The latter arrived at Versailles the fifteenth of May 1770, and was received in the Marble Court by the king and the dauphin. The day following, the concluding ceremonies of her marriage were celebrated in the chapel. The bride first appeared at ten o'clock in morning dress, with her hair carelessly arranged. Her portrait as drawn by Bachaumont is as follows:— "She is very well made, symmetrical in all her members; her hair is a beautiful blonde, one fancies it will some day be a pale chestnut. Her forehead is fine; her face somewhat long, but a graceful oval; her eyebrows as well marked as a blonde's can be. Her eyes are blue without being dull, and sparkle with a vivacity full of intelligence. Her nose is aquiline, rather thin at the tip. Her mouth is small; her lips are thick, especially the under one, which is known to be the Austrian lip. Her skin is of a dazzling whiteness, and she has a natural colour which needs no rouge. Her bearing is that of an archduchess, but her dignity is tempered with sweetness."

A later writer thus describes the marriage ceremony at Versailles. "At one o'clock the Dauphiness in full dress, and followed by a numerous cortége, goes to the chapel with the Dauphin. The officiating priest is the Archbishop of Reims, Monseigneur de la Roche-Aymon, Grand Almoner of France. The pair advance to the altar and kneel down. The chapel is decked with flowers and garlands, and glitters with a thousand lights. The

Archbishop blesses thirteen pieces of gold and a gold ring. These he presents to the Dauphin who puts the ring on the fourth finger of the left hand of the Dauphiness, and afterwards gives her the thirteen gold pieces. After the "Our Father" has been said, the canopy of silver brocade is held over them by the Bishop of Senlis on the side of the prince, and the Bishop of Chartres on that of the Princess. The spouses, profoundly moved, plight each other an affection which death itself shall not have power to interrupt.

"At this moment all Paris is at Versailles. The people have been coming on foot since daybreak. The citizens have been arriving, some on hired horses, some in cabs, some in carriages from livery stables. The park is thronged by an immense crowd. Alas! the sad omens are about to be renewed.[1] At three in the afternoon the sky is overcast with clouds. Rain pours down in torrents. The thunder rumbles. Everyone seeks shelter. There is a general panic. In the evening the weather is so bad that the fireworks cannot be set off. The illuminations are drowned in rain: the streets and squares of Versailles are like a desert.

"But if the approaches to the chateau are dismal in the evening, it is dazzling within. All the splendours of aristocracy, riches, luxury, and the fine arts are gathered there. There is a game of *lans-*

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[1] A frightful storm had marked her crossing of the frontier.

quenet in the Gallery of Mirrors, and a supper is served *au grand couvert* in the hall known as the Queen's Antechamber.

"The next day, the seventeenth of May, the new theatre, begun in 1753 by the architect Gabriel, is opened for the first time. . . . The piece presented is the opera of *Persée*, words by Quinault, music by Lulli. May nineteenth, a grand dress ball, opened by the Dauphin and Dauphiness, is given in the new playhouse."

Certain questions of precedence at this ball raised a storm among the nobility of France, which penetrated even to foreign courts. A princess of Lorraine, because of her relationship to the Dauphiness, was allowed to precede the French nobles in the minuet. "A grand memorial" of protest to the king resulted which actually threatened war. The entire affair is most amusingly described by Madame du Deffand, in a letter to Horace Walpole. She closes with "All that for a minuet."

Chapter XVIII

VERSAILLES (CONTINUED)

AT Versailles in 1774 Louis XV. was startled by the Lenten Sermon preached by the Abbé of Beauvais, Bishop of Senez. "Yet forty days, sire, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." Then the eloquent Abbé compared Paris with Nineveh, and urged upon his hearers the necessity of repentance. But the words of his text lingered in the King's mind. That "forty days" oppressed him, and he remarked that he should not be at ease until they were passed. A few weeks later, some say within just the forty days, Louis XV. was prostrated at Versailles by that dread disease small-pox. Only a few servants, and his devoted daughters braved its terrors to attend the dying king. Even of these, a number of lives were sacrificed, though to Mesdames only a disfigurement resulted. The king's illness was recognised at once as hopeless, and a crowd of anxious courtiers were soon assembled on the terrace and in the court yard watching for the blowing out of a candle, in the window of an antechamber, which was to announce the end. Many more hastened at once to pay court to Louis XVI., who for fear of contagion, awaited the announcement of his accession in a remote part of the chateau.

After the death of the king, the body was hastily thrust into a casket, and covered with quick lime, the first conveyance at hand was pressed into service, and a few attendants, wearing no mourning, and carrying torches, for it was the dead of night, set out for St. Denis at a "fast trot." Only one veteran soldier shouldered his musket and saluted as the procession passed out of the gates of Versailles, and those who encountered it by the way, are said to have given it an imprecation, or a handful of sand to show their hatred and disrespect.

Several months were required to purify the tainted atmosphere of Versailles, but after that was accomplished, a new king and a new court were soon established there. How different the chief actors in the royal drama from those which had preceded! Instead of the courtly and polished Louis XV., for, though vicious and depraved, Louis XV. had possessed exquisite taste and a royal dignity, there was a fat, untidy, bourgeois king, honest and well meaning, but utterly lacking in ability, either to rule his kindom or his court. Louis XVI. had no appreciation of beauty, and locked up or stored away the works of art collected by his predecessors, and his favourite occupations were eating, and forging iron.

But though the king was honest and good, intrigue was by no means banished from Versailles. No specific charges have ever been proven against Marie Antoinette, but the corruption of her entourage must be conceded, and to all appearance, except that she was less depraved, as well as less dignified, she took up the rôle laid down by Louis XV.

Under Louis XVI., Versailles was filled with the worthless favourites of the queen, who grew rich out of the royal revenues, and followed the heedless leadership of their empty-headed mistress. As both the king and queen found the duties and ceremonies of their station irksome, they were continually laid aside, until a stranger would have found it difficult to recognise the king when he held his reunions in the Grand Gallery of Versailles. The queen escaped from the burdens of royalty, not only by an occasional residence at La Petite Trianon, but in certain apartments which she had fitted up under the roof at Versailles. There also she received her intimates on a footing of equality, and gave herself up to the caprice of the passing moment.

The receptions *à la toilette*, which had been inaugurated by Madame de Pompadour, were continued by Marie Antoinette in the exquisite apartments fitted up for her. Very frequently the most important personage at these functions was the celebrated *coiffeur*, Leonard, who built up the extravagant headdresses of the period. These were made of lace, ribbon, fruits, flowers, and even wax figures and inscriptions. While these structures were being reared, the light-minded queen received those who happened to strike her fancy or to amuse her. Of these Glück was given a very flattering welcome, and many times assisted at the *toilette*. Franklin and Lafayette were also well received at Versailles during the early years of this reign. The former was said to have "snatched the lightning from Olympus," and was consequently lionised as a curiosity, a reputation not lessened by his unpolished manners and homely dress.

Two of the queen's brothers visited the French court at Versailles, though both were supposed to have come incognito, and Joseph, who became Joseph II., Emperor of Austria, declined to be domiciled beneath its roof, preferring the freedom of a private lodging in Paris. "The court," he said, "could only be compared to a '*tripot*,' or ordinary gambling house," and "Versailles sheltered too many '*polissons*' (blackguards)." The excessive sumptuousness of Versailles under Louis XIV. and XV. had apparently declined somewhat, and Joseph appears to have been less struck with its magnificence than with the want of order pervading it. Vendors of all sorts of cheap wares, of toys, gingerbread and the like, were not only found setting up their stalls against the palace walls, but in the very stairways, and the loathsome ills of professional beggars added their misery and meanness to the unseemly disorder which distressed the fastidious soul of the Emperor.

That most dramatic episode in the never-to-be-untangled mystery of the diamond necklace, the arrest of Cardinal Rohan, occurred at Versailles, where he had come in full pontificals, and wearing the Grand Cross of St. Louis to perform mass in the royal chapel on the day of the Assumption. How much, or how little, the queen was implicated in the mysterious disappearance of the diamonds has never been known, but, whether innocent or guilty, nothing could have been more unwise than the arrest of the Cardinal Prince. In making him a victim, Marie Antoinette, who was never able to clear herself entirely of suspicion, added a long score to her own unpopularity, already sufficiently great, and, in the end, the ignominy of the entire affair recoiled upon her and upon the king.

Louis XVI. was but a dull figure in the background of his court at Versailles. He was fond of eating enormous dinners in public, but he rarely took part in any of the gaieties of which the queen was always the central figure. In the spring of 1775, when serious disturbances were caused by the price of bread, he was able to quell the tumult which culminated at Versailles, by appearing on a balcony, and ordering that the price of a loaf should be reduced to two *sous*. Such action was the beginning and extent of the ability of Louis XVI. as a ruler.

The beginning of the end for Louis XVI. was the Assembly of the States-General at Versailles in May 1789. Its opening ceremony was presided over by the king and queen, and all deputies were recognised, but after its first sitting, the deputies of the Third Estate were contemptuously ignored by the *noblesse* and clergy. The provincial deputies, determined that no question of taxation, or civil or criminal law reform, should be entered upon without their concurrence in the proceedings, assembled every day in the "Salle des États." One morning that was closed to them, on the pretext of the employment of workmen there in preparation for a royal séance. Then adjournment was made to the Tennis court, where a solemn oath was taken never to separate until France had received from them a constitution based on a firm and solid foundation. This was the first session of the National Assembly.

From this beginning, events marched with a rapid pace. In August, two months later, the king and queen were obliged to be present at a *Te Deum* sung at Versailles to celebrate the declaration adopted by the National Assembly called the "Rights of Man." In October occurred the famous dinner in the theatre at Versailles, given by the household troops to win back to the king the fidelity of the National

Guard. The king and queen not only sanctioned the affair, but were present for a time, and it ended in a hilarious outburst of loyalty. The newly adopted tri-colour cockades of the Revolution were trampled under foot by the half drunken soldiers, and replaced by the white cockades of France, and the black ones of Austria, distributed by the ladies of the queen. The papers published flaming accounts of the banquet, and public indignation speedily fanned itself into a fury, which ended in the invasion of Versailles by a mob from Paris.

Accounts of the horrors that followed are much confused. Marie Antoinette is said to have shown the dauphin to the angry multitude, who were largely women, from a balcony of the palace, but the only reply was the sullen roar "*Le Roi à Paris.*" Two days and nights of terror and bloodshed followed; the palace was overrun and sacked by the rabble; and three of the queen's guards lost their lives in trying to save her. Then the king and the queen, with such members of the royal family or the court as had not effected an escape, were carried back in triumph to Paris, and the history of Versailles as a royal residence was closed.

During the Revolution the palace narrowly escaped being sold, and probably destroyed, and during the Empire it was neglected. The cost of repairs, or even of preventing further ruin, would have been enormous, and Napoleon's extravagance was war.

Besides, Versailles in itself was not beautiful, and without furnishings or decorations, and with ruined gardens, possessed few attractions. St. Cloud was much more desirable for a summer residence, and there the court of Josephine was often held.

A slight effort was made by Louis XVIII. and Charles X. to prevent further ruin at Versailles, but it was Louis Philippe who finally undertook its restoration, and gave the chateau its present use, about the only thing it was fit for, a historical museum.

Upon the occasion of the visit of Queen Victoria to Paris, during the Second Empire, a great ball was given in the galleries of Versailles, whose magnificence was talked of in Paris for years. "The empress," said the queen, "met us at the top of the staircase, looking like a fairy queen or nymph. She wore a white dress trimmed with bunches of grasses and diamonds, a beautiful *tour de corsage* of diamonds around the top of her dress, and all *en rivière;* the same around her waist, and a corresponding headdress, and her Spanish and Portuguese orders. The emperor said when she appeared, '*Comme tu es belle.*'"

The last chapter of history at Versailles is that of the Franco-Prussian War. During the siege of Paris it was made the headquarters of the German army, who occupied it from September 1870 until March 1871, and who turned a large part of the vast palace into a military hospital. It was also in the Galerie des Glaces that the King of Prussia was, for the first time, saluted by the unanimous consent of the German States, as Emperor of the Germans.

After the departure of the German army, the headquarters of the French provisional government, earlier established at Bordeaux, was removed to Versailles. From there they, in their turn, were obliged to besiege Paris, which was almost immediately in the hands of the Communists. The struggle for the possession of the city, one of the most bitter in her history, continued for two months, and, at its close, when the government had triumphed, the Orangery at Versailles was turned into a prison. There thousands of the unfortunate, as well as the guilty, were confined until they could be tried, and either condemned or released. Their sufferings, from lack of food and from vitiated air in so unsuitable a place, are said to have been frightful.

In 1871, the government transferred its headquarters to Paris, and since then the quiet of the sleepy little town is only disturbed by the stream of tourists which constantly flows through the gates of the great palace. Its nearness to Paris, together with its size and splendour, causes Versailles to attract perhaps a larger number of visitors than any other show palace in Europe, and upon those stated days when the fountains play, or when the famous gardens are illuminated in honour of some visiting dignitary, the crowds which flock thither are swelled to enormous proportions. These stroll in the stately alleys, which are once more royally kept, tramp through the endless galleries, or invade the historic apartments of kings and queens and royal favourites. Of those usually shown, the curious will linger longest in the rooms once occupied by Madame de Pompadour, Madame de Maintenon or Marie Antoinette, but more than all in the magnificent *Chamber du Roi*, the bed chamber of the Grand Monarque himself. There it is that the splendour and interest of the vast palace still culminate. Louis XIV. made it into a sort of Holy of Holies, enthroning himself as a god, and surrounding his sacred person with the pomp and circumstance of an oriental despot. From there he wielded a power grown to its last stages of absolutism, and from there, while he brought this last barren monstrosity of the French Renaissance to its completion, he wrought the ruin of his house, and of France.

To all human seeming, the punishment for his sins fell upon those who came after, but as he lay dying on yonder bed, deserted by all who had fawned upon him in his hours of power, may it not be possible that Louis XIV. tasted the bitterness of the coming desolation; that to his dulled ears there came from the court below that bitter cry of an oppressed and desperate people, which was to sound the doom of the House of Capet, "*Le Roi à Paris*"; that his fading vision caught a glimpse of the sullen faces, and the bloodthirsty guillotine of the Place de la Concorde, which was to make an end of his dynasty, and of the power of the monarch in France? Here in this palace at Versailles, the absolutism of that power reached its culmination. Here it fed during its last years upon the very life of the nation, and in wringing from a wretched and downtrodden people such a vast and useless pile as this, the "demon of the colossal" not only "got itself satisfied," but prepared the way for its own destruction.

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